NRA MEMBER U.S. WE DO OUR PART

The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXVIII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1934 No. 3577

Contents

EDITORIAL PARAGRAPHS 85
EDITORIALS:
Where Will the Money Come From? 88
Rule by Advertisers 89
A National Waterway 89
A Neglected Art 90
ISSUES AND MEN. THE CRUCIAL MONTHS AHEAD. By Oswald Garrison Villard 91
"ART" AND THE AD MAN. By James Rorty 92
FREEDOM OF SPEECH. By Carl Becker 94
THE NEW DEAL AT MONTEVIDEO. By Samuel Guy Inman . . 97
A NEW REBELLION IN CHINA. By Crispian Corcoran . . . 99
THE WASHINGTON SEESAW. By Paul Y. Anderson 101
IN THE DRIFTWAY. By the Drifter 102
CORRESPONDENCE 103
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE 104
BOOKS, ARCHITECTURE, DRAMA:
Sculptured. By Charlotte Wilder 105
Sean O'Faolain. By William Troy 105
Book of a Liberal. By Lewis Galantière 106
White and Black. By Dorothy Van Doren 106
Honesty and Fiction. By Eda Lou Walton 107
Franklin and His Grandson. By William MacDonald 107
Justice Brandeis. By Beryl Harold Levy 108
Shorter Notices 108
Architecture: 1933: Looking Forward at Chicago. By Douglas Haskell 109
Drama: "The Sickness of Today." By Joseph Wood Krutch . . 110
Films: Garbo and Screen Acting. By William Troy 112

BOARD OF EDITORS

ERNEST GRUENING FREDA KIRCHWEY
JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
MAURITZ A. HALLGREN MARGARET MARSHALL
DOROTHY VAN DOREN

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States; to Canada, $5.50; and to other foreign countries, $6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City, Cable Address: NATION, New York. Muriel C. Gray, Advertising Manager. British Agent, Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, W. C. 1, England.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S latest monetary plan seems to be a compromise designed to please as many persons as possible and gloss over some of the fundamental difficulties of the Administration's financial policy. An obvious defect is that it does not provide the genuine stabilization of values that would ensue from devalorization by a fixed percentage and a simultaneous resumption of gold payments, but Mr. Roosevelt may naturally hesitate to take that step at present, if indeed he intends to take it at all. His scheme seems to contemplate an attempt at a managed currency for an indefinite period, at least within a prescribed range. Whether industry will thrive any better under such modified insecurity of values than it has heretofore, remains to be seen, but there seems to be a feeling that the demand for new kinds of inflation has been staved off for the time. Theoretically, the announcement of a definite intention to devaluate the dollar at least 40 per cent should be followed by higher prices. Actually, it is not certain that its immediate effect on domestic prices will be greater than has been that of the lessened value of the dollar in foreign exchange. Apparently this effect has been slight, since such price rises as we have had are more readily attributable to other causes. Mr. Roosevelt's monetary policy has failed to bring the immediate higher prices which he wanted, for which the country, if not the President, may well be thankful. Just the same, in the long run the devaluation of the dollar seems likely to reduce its purchasing power at home as well as abroad, and the gradualness of the process, if it occurs, should not blind the public to the knowledge that the government has confiscated a portion of its savings. This will not have been done by a capital levy or taxes falling specially on the well-to-do, but by a straight slash into the savings of poor as well as rich. In fact, it must fall most heavily on the small saver, as his little accumulations are mainly in fixed-dollar values—savings-bank accounts, Liberty bonds, insurance policies, and the like. It may be, though it is not certain, that some such despoliation of the middle class is inevitable, but if so it should not be forgotten as an indictment of the industrial system under which we live.

DESPITE a few unexpected signs of restiveness that developed in the first ten days of its present session, there is no reason to suppose that Congress will not remain the well-mannered though not especially deliberative body which the Administration considers so necessary to its purposes. It is apparent that the Republicans will make little trouble, not only because they have but a handful of votes, but also because they lack intellectual courage. The President gave them a unique opportunity when he bravely announced that his recovery program would make necessary a budgetary deficit of something like seven billion dollars, the largest deficit in the country's history. A determined opposition could doubtless have made excellent political capital out of this startling statement. But the Republicans, either because they were struck mute by the President's audacity or because they suddenly recalled Andrew Mellon's habitual miscalculations in handling the budget, forgot to roar. They contented themselves with a polite request or two for detailed information on how the various recovery appropriations were being expended. The Democrats quite naturally are disposed to go along with the President. Yet it is from the Democratic side that difficulties may be expected if the Administration does not watch its step. Though they have a common party label, the Democrats in Congress represent numerous conflicting economic and sectional interests. It will take very tactful handling to keep them all loyal to the Roosevelt program.

THUS IT WOULD BEHOOVE the Administration not to put Congress to too severe a test. It almost overreached itself when it insisted upon forcing a gag rule on the House with a view to expediting legislation to extend certain provisions of the 1933 Economy Act. This stratagem was both unnecessary and unwise; unnecessary because the House had already indicated its willingness to approve the Administration's economy bill without unreasonable delay, and unwise because it aroused a great deal of hostility among otherwise loyal Democrats. The gag rule is an illiberal and hardly defensible measure at any time, but in the present instance there was added the suggestion that the Administra-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion did not fully trust its own party members in Congress. As it was, the rule was forced through with a margin of only five votes, eighty-four Democrats joining with the solid Republican and Farmer-Labor delegations in opposing it. True, the Democrats were under pressure from several strongly organized lobbies. But this should have warned the Administration to proceed with more than ordinary caution instead of rushing in with a measure that was bound to offend the sensibilities of most Congressmen.

THE RECOVERY ACT was devised, in part at least, to increase consumer purchasing power. This was to be done by spreading employment over a greater number of workers and also, what is more important, *by increasing the real wage-income of these workers.* Employment has been increased somewhat, but the buying power of the workers as a whole has not been improved. Indeed, to judge by the studies of the American Federation of Labor and other agencies, the real wage-income of the working class is perhaps lower today that it was last spring. For wages have not risen so rapidly or so far as prices. A part of the fault lies with the NRA codes. These permit employers to raise their prices in order to cover the additional labor costs made necessary by the codes. But obviously, if the total wage rise is offset by a commensurate price rise, no expansion of purchasing power has been achieved. General Hugh S. Johnson seems to be aware that the code system has fallen short of its goal in some respects. But instead of supporting the Consumers' Advisory Board in its desire for an inquiry into the effect higher prices have had upon purchasing power, he has sought to minimize the importance of the price factor. He has shown himself equally unconcerned with the wage problem. On the other hand, he is advocating a further reduction of the working week to thirty-two hours from the present forty-hour average. Such a reduction is unquestionably necessary, for the slack in employment is still distressingly large. But under the circumstances any further reduction of the working week that is not accompanied by an absolute rise in the wage-income of the workers as a whole can amount only to an extension of the share-the-work idea.

THE OLD HABIT of appointing unreconstructed Southerners to government posts in the Caribbean seems to persist despite the unfortunate results that almost invariably follow. Puerto Rico, having happily lost a Mississippian as Governor, has now been presented with a native of Georgia. The fact that ex-Governor Gore was politically inept, inexperienced, and hopelessly ignorant of Puerto Rican affairs, while Major General Winship is undoubtedly able and intelligent, only slightly modifies our regret at his appointment. The new Governor has had an excellent record as an officer, and is reputed to be a kind and cultured gentleman, but he unites in himself the attitudes characteristic of the South and of the army—a combination peculiarly unfortunate in Puerto Rico as it would be in any of the Caribbean islands. The first essential for a governor of Puerto Rico is a shrewd understanding of the intense, highly developed political life of the island, and a respect for its people. The second is an ability to keep out of partisan political activities. Mr. Gore failed in both respects. General Winship may know enough to refuse to become entangled in island politics, but we fear that he brings to his position an inbred sense of the superiority of the United States and its institutions and a kindly contempt for "backward" and underprivileged peoples that are bound to injure his chances as governor. When Governor Gore resigned, the Administration had an opportunity to send to Puerto Rico a man who would represent the aims, economic and political, proclaimed by Mr. Roosevelt. By the appointment of Governor Winship, it has forfeited this chance.

THE RESIGNATION of Ramon Grau San Martin and the assumption of the presidency of Cuba by Carlos Hevia on January 15 accentuated rather than lessened confusion in the republic. As this issue of *The Nation* went to press the differences between Colonel Fulgencio Batista, Chief of Staff of the army, and Antonio Guiteras, Secretary of the Interior, War, and Navy, had apparently reached a stage of open rupture, and a clash of forces was predicted. The one certainty in the situation was that the policy of the United States in the last six months had failed, leaving a condition of greater turmoil than at any time since the fall of Machado. This was bound to happen, as *The Nation* has repeatedly indicated, in consequence of our refusal either to fish or cut bait. There can be only two courses for the United States to pursue in Latin America. It may forcibly intervene and dictate the government that is to exist, as to its shame it has done in various instances in the past. Or, if it is to live up to our better traditions and the policy of non-intervention recently announced by Mr. Roosevelt, it can refuse to meddle, and recognize any regime which obtains a de facto control of the government. There is no middle course, such as we attempted with President Grau, for it is an accepted doctrine in Latin America that no government in a small state can survive without recognition from the United States. This ought not to be so, but it has become a fact owing to our financial dominance of the Western Hemisphere and a policy followed for many years of imposing our will on less powerful republics. Our continued refusal to recognize President Grau doomed him to defeat as surely as frank intervention. But where has it got either the United States or Cuba?

IGNORING THE PROTESTS of the Dutch government, the Nazis have proceeded with the execution of Marinus van der Lubbe, the young Hollander convicted of having started the Reichstag fire. Several aspects of the case are particularly unpleasant. First, the execution was carried out under the provisions of a retroactive law passed after the fire, making arson punishable by death. Second, Van der Lubbe himself gave little evidence of being aware of what was happening to him. At the trial, after his first explosive acknowledgment of his earlier confession and his plea to "kill me and get it over with," he showed no interest in, and indeed no ability to comprehend the proceedings. Sunk in a lethargy, he evinced all the symptoms of an advanced form of dementia praecox. To guillotine such a person, of whom there were the gravest suspicions of pathological irresponsibility, seems even more horrible than the numerous other murders of which the Nazis have been guilty. With Van der Lubbe's death all hope disappears of solving the question whether or not he had accomplices and who they were. The Nazis may be expected now to turn their attention to Ernst Torgler and the three Bulgarian Communists acquitted of arson but still held in jail. Torgler, as the avowed leader

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Communist Party in Germany, will, it is announced, be tried for high treason and conspiracy against the state. If the critical eye of the world kept the German court from carrying out, in the first trial, the evident bloody intentions of the German government, there is all the more need, in the trial that is to come, of protest from every possible source.

IN THE HITLER-DOLLFUSS FIGHT for supremacy in Austria, the Austrian Premier unquestionably scored a victory in the last engagement. The arrest of an attaché of the German Embassy in a secret meeting of Austrian Nazis proves that Berlin is directing and paying for the movement to overthrow the Dollfuss Government. Documents confiscated on this occasion show that the National Socialists are planning not only the overthrow of the present regime but an Austrian revolution. Heimwehr leaders are demanding a fascist regime. They insist on the suppression of the Social Democratic Party and on the appointment of an administrator for Vienna to take the place of the Social Democratic municipal council. Chancellor Dollfuss does not object to such measures, but he is unwilling at this stage to grant the demand that the most important Cabinet posts be filled with Heimwehr leaders. The Heimwehr, on its part, is trying to force his hand by threatening to make common cause with the National Socialists. Indeed, the presence of Count Alberti, Heimwehr leader for Lower Austria, in the above-mentioned meeting points to a well-developed alliance between the two openly fascist groups. It seems clear that fascism will shortly replace what remains of republican institutions. The latest politico-economic measures of the Dollfuss regime show that the Christian Social Party is prepared to take the final step; it has already announced the appointment of a commission of employers, officials, and workers to outline the reconstruction of Austrian industry in a corporate state.

THE PRESS has long been carrying on a battle with the radio as a dispenser of news, charging that because of federal licensing freedom of the air is unknown. But this year's meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in Philadelphia brought out strikingly the extent and kind of censorship which radio stations themselves exercise. The meeting's topic was the NRA, and one of the speakers was Frederick J. Schlink, head of Consumers' Research. The address was scheduled to be broadcast over the Columbia chain, the president of which, William S. Paley, is a member of the academy. As usual, one of the directors of the local station read the speech first. It was sharply critical, pointing out that the benefit of the NRA to the consumer was still largely negative, because it was permitting commercial prices to rise too rapidly. It also took exception to the great volume of misleading advertising which the radio, among other media, lets loose. After several conferences Columbia decided that the address was a "direct, unwarranted attack on the Administration" and refused Mr. Schlink the air, substituting something more innocuous and "constructive." The Philadelphia *Record* told the story and it created something of a furor. Columbia officials, including Mr. Paley, disavowed the censorship action of "a subordinate," and General Johnson said it was "silly," adding that the NRA welcomed criticism and Columbia did what it did without any influence or pressure from the Administration. Mr. Schlink was permitted to give his speech on the air a week later and it did not shatter any radio sets.

PHILADELPHIA'S bloody taxicab strike is over, and the powerful Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company has agreed to recognize the union of some 900 drivers—the first union to pierce the paternal Mitten street-railway monopoly. It was in the cause of union recognition that the men converted a lockout into a strike and stayed out seven weeks, and it was in this cause that hundreds of taxicabs were damaged or destroyed and hundreds of strikers arrested for violence. But the significant thing about the strike is that the drivers' victory was achieved without the aid of the National Labor Board. The P. R. T. was one of three large companies which ran into trouble through persistent support of the company union. The others were the Budd Manufacturing Company, also in Philadelphia, and the Weirton steel mills. The National Labor Board made dire threats about what would happen if its demands were not acceded to, but thus far no action has been taken, although according to General Johnson both criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits are contemplated. The same ultimatum was sent to the P. R. T., which promptly refused to recognize the Labor Board's authority, and imported several score more strike-breakers. The settlement was finally made in self-defense; the company was losing heavily by the strike, not only in taxicab transportation but on its trolley and subway lines as well. Senator Wagner hailed the settlement as a victory for the Labor Board, but it is quite obvious that that claim can be disputed.

SOME of the peculiar evils of overbuilding in New York and doubtless other cities are shown by the suit just brought against the Rockefeller Center development by real-estate interests under the control of August Heckscher. The Rockefellers are charged with unlawful competition in an attempt to obtain tenants for the Rockefeller Center buildings by lowering rents below the level which was sufficient to pay fixed charges through bonuses offered to prospective tenants, and by inducing such tenants, for monetary considerations or otherwise, to break leases already contracted in other buildings. It was evident when the elaborate and extensive plans for Rockefeller Center were first published that there was no demand in that neighborhood for the enormous extension of office space which the buildings would afford. It should have been evident that tenants for such buildings could only be had at the expense of other structures already built. And it is evident now that tenants could only be induced to leave their former quarters and lodge their businesses in Rockefeller Center by extraordinary means. Whether or not these means are also illegal, the present lawsuit will demonstrate. It is just as well that a test case of what everybody has been suspecting should be made with defendants as well known as the owners of Rockefeller Center. And if the unfair practices of which they are accused are established, the government could not do a more effective job of relief than to appropriate money for the razing of some of our more splendiferous business structures and the creation upon their site of public parks or playgrounds, with special benches, perhaps, reserved for the former owners of the vanished towers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where Will the Money Come From?

THE depression, if and when it ends, will leave behind it as a monument a public debt higher than any incurred before in the history of the United States, a debt more than sixteen times as great as that which the country supported for many years before the war. Public debts have to be paid off—unless the debtor defaults—and in the process they have to be supported; and it is primarily the people of the country who are called upon to provide the money to do both. If the people fail, if their government cannot get out of them enough to pay the interest and amortization of its debt, the only alternative is repudiation, which in most cases takes the form of printed paper money distributed to the creditors. This process reduces the debt, but it also dilutes the incomes of all the citizens in a way that in the end produces more painful effects than even the most uncomfortable open taxation.

The President's budget message makes it clear that he expects eventually to pay off the vast borrowing projected, not by printed money, but by an increase in the government's receipts consequent upon a return of prosperity within the next two years, at least to the level of 1924. If his expectations are proved wrong, we may as well admit at the start that the country faces repudiation through a dangerous dose of inflation. But let us adopt for a moment the President's role of optimist. Let us assume that when 1936 arrives, the country's prosperity will have reached the figure of 98, which is 1924's proud index number, and that the public debt will be no more than 32 billion dollars. We may, of course, still face certain additional emergency expenses; the railways, for example, can hardly be expected to recover along with the rest of the country, and the government may be forced to purchase and operate them. This alone would add at least 13 billion to the debt. There is the possibility of another wasteful and destructive war. There is the probability of another costly depression. Any of these would necessitate enormous government borrowing and result in another large increase in the national debt.

A sound government fiscal policy is one which will permit a rapid expansion of public expenditures in time of depression or sudden need. The success of such a policy must obviously depend, first, upon the maintenance of a high degree of confidence in public credit, so that the government will always be able to borrow funds at low interest rates, and, second, upon a rapid reduction of the public debt in time of prosperity, so that it can be safely expanded in time of need. That the first of these conditions is not being fulfilled at present is evident from the fact that the Treasury is now faced with the necessity of borrowing 10 billion dollars before June 30 in a market where its short-term notes are selling at a yield of well over 2 per cent and many of its long-term issues at nearly 4 per cent.

Fulfilment of the second condition requires the immediate adoption by the Administration of a realistic taxation policy. If we are to be prepared for future financial emergencies we must plan to reduce the public debt much more rapidly than we did during the post-war decade, probably at the rate of at least 2 billion dollars a year. (Even at this rate eight years would be required to liquidate the cost of the depression and bring the public debt to the 1930 level.) At least another billion dollars will be needed to pay interest at 3 per cent, so that debt service alone will cost the people of the United States in the neighborhood of 3 billion dollars a year. Assuming that general operating expenses can be held to another 3 billion, it appears that the annual federal budget for some years to come can hardly be less than, and may greatly exceed, 6 billion dollars. This is a larger amount than the government has ever collected in any year except in 1920, when prices were about twice as high as they are now and war profits were pouring into the Treasury. It is three times as large as government revenues last year. It is half again as much as the annual receipts during the seven years from 1923 to 1929, when the public debt was being reduced at the rate of a billion a year and prices and wages were 40 per cent higher than at present. If this obligation is to be met, most of the money must be obtained from sharply increased income and inheritance taxes.

It is necessary to inquire whether the very rich can be made to foot a substantial part of the bill. In 1924 the money income of the nation was 70 billion dollars, half again as large as it is now; wholesale prices were 40 per cent higher; unemployment was negligible as compared with the 10 million or more persons out of work at present; government receipts were 4 billion dollars—twice the amount collected last year. Of the estimated 44 million persons who were gainfully occupied in that year, income-tax returns were filed by only some 7 million, which presumably included all single persons earning more than $1,000 and all married persons earning more than $2,500. If Huey Long's idea of confiscating all income over 1 million dollars had been put into effect, the seventy-five persons reporting such incomes in 1924 would have had to contribute about 80 million dollars, or enough to "run the government" for five days on a 6-billion-dollar annual budget. If each of the 22,000 persons reporting more than $50,000 a year had been made to disgorge all income above that amount, the Treasury would have been enriched by about $1,200,000,000—not much more than enough to pay interest on a public debt of 32 billion dollars. Apparently most of the gold will have to be found in the foothills rather than the mountain peaks. Out of the total net income of some 25 billion dollars on which taxes were paid in 1924, 91 per cent was earned by persons receiving less than $50,000 a year; 85 per cent by those earning less than $25,000. Obviously, it is the "backbone of America," the good old middle class, which will have to foot the bill when it is finally paid.

And the bill will have to be paid, of course. The only alternative to a budget ultimately balanced by adequate taxation is debt repudiation through uncontrolled inflation. And inflation is in reality no alternative to taxation. It is merely another and a grossly inequitable form of taxation—a devastating sales tax which exhausts the purchasing power of the wage-earner, and a cruel form of capital levy which destroys not the holdings of the very rich but the savings of the small man.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rule by Advertisers

THE medicine men, the ad men, and the vitamin men have won the first round of the Tugwell bill fight. They will win the final decision during the next few weeks unless, by some miracle, the people of this country can be induced to crack the whip over Congress and force back into the bill the crucial provisions which were either struck out or modified to death in Senator Copeland's revision. In its present form the bill does not oblige patent-medicine manufacturers to disclose the full formula of their products on the label. The "not a cure" statement has been eliminated, and therapeutic claims may be made if they are supported by substantial medical opinion. Such opinion has been purchased in the past and will doubtless be purchased in the future. The restriction on advertising which threw the big drug houses into a panic has been almost emasculated.

Why did this happen? It happened because the embattled ad men and patent-medicine men cracked the whip over Congress and particularly over the press. All over the country publishers and editors heard the Master's Voice. For example, if you were a country editor how would you feel if you pulled out of your mail this grim communiqué from the Creomulsion Company of Atlanta, Georgia?

> GENTLEMEN: You are about to lose a substantial amount of advertising revenue from food, drug, and cosmetic manufacturers. Your pocket-book is about to be filched, and you will see how if you will personally study . . . the inclosed copy of the Tugwell bill. This bill was introduced by *two doctors*. . . . You publish your paper for profit and as a service to your community. In most virile business organizations the altruistic policies in the final analysis are means to the primary end, which is profit. . . . An isolated editorial or two will not suffice. . . . You need to take an aggressive stand against this measure. You need to bring all personal pressure you can upon your Senators and Representatives. You need to enlighten and thereby arouse your public against this bill that is calculated to greatly restrict personal rights. If this bill should become law we will be forced to cancel immediately every line of Creomulsion advertising.

Doubtless our "free" press, with some honorable exceptions, saw its duty and "enlightened" the public as ordered. But when Dr. Walter Campbell and his associates in the Food and Drug Administration attempted a little enlightenment of their own, what happened? The trade press of the drug, food, and advertising industries raved against the Washington "bureaucrats" who, they alleged, were misusing public funds to tell the truth—nobody has impugned the accuracy of Dr. Campbell's exhibits—to the people. Nor was that all. Congressmen began to get missives like the following from Daniel A. Lundy, "Advertising Counsel and Copy":

> MY DEAR SENATOR: It would seem, if Section 6 of the Deficiency Appropriation Act, for the fiscal year of 1919 and prior year, is still active, that Walter Campbell may well be dismissed and prosecuted for his alleged gross violations and abuse of authority in spending government money without permission of the Congress for radio, Paramount newsreel, diversion of his employees' time for selfish purposes, and other means to influence passage of unconstitutional Tugwell-Copeland-Sirovich food and drug bill.
>
> Walter Campbell, it would seem, has overridden all official propriety and wisdom in his alleged overt act, and no public trust or confidence once violated, as in this case, can be restored. There seems but one road for Congress—the road of dismissing the chief of the food and drug department, with penalties, if substantiated.
>
> All others who have aided and abetted in these vicious and irregular proposals, whether in lending their names or in actions, should come under the same discipline.
>
> Honest industry and a decent public prays for a thorough and speedy investigation and not a whitewash of an alleged crime as despicable and deplorable as the sell-out of the Teapot Dome.

Dr. Campbell, an able, honest, and courageous official, is on the spot. Professor Tugwell and his associates are on the spot. The Consumers' Advisory Board of the NRA and especially Dr. Robert S. Lynd are on the spot. F. J. Schlink, director of Consumers' Research, is on the spot. *Printers' Ink* remarks that "advertisers have been too lenient with F. J. They have underestimated the importance of Consumers' Research."

It would seem that the fight on the Tugwell bill, even if lost, was worth staging for at least one reason: it has given us a concrete example of what rule by business means. It should be clear that every man or woman in public life who challenges the vested interests of even the least defensible commercial rackets—and the proprietary medicine and advertising rackets are in that category—will sooner or later be "taken for a ride." And the Fourth Estate will either have to cooperate with these business gangsters or find some other source of income besides the advertising of the Creomulsion manufacturers and their ilk.

A National Waterway

THE fight against the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence waterway, which in our issue of December 27 we predicted was likely to be made in Congress this winter, took definite and dangerous shape as soon as the new session began. Forces began to mobilize almost at once which darkened the outlook for ratification of the treaty with Canada in spite of a special message in favor of the waterway from President Roosevelt. As we indicated in our previous discussion, there is evidence that the opposition—nominally against the waterway as a navigational project—is actually a covert attack upon the power development contemplated in the scheme, made by utilities interests of New York and neighboring States which see their monopoly and their oppressive rates threatened by government-produced electric current. This is not to say, of course, that men have not been led into the opposition camp for honest reasons, but the suddenness and force with which the storm gathered out of an almost clear sky are not explainable as a spontaneous change in public sentiment. It should be recalled that the St. Lawrence waterway has been before the public as a definite project for more than a decade and had been gaining favor all the time until the recent mobilization against it. A preliminary treaty with Canada was ratified in 1932, and it would seem that the Senate should be more than ever ready to go on with the project today when the federal government is trying to develop a large public-works program.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The arguments urged against the waterway at this stage of the proceedings seem essentially trivial or belated. The technical objections now raised have all been considered and dismissed by our army engineers, whose verdict must naturally be accepted by the average layman just as it is accepted by President Roosevelt. That the waterway may do some damage to local interests, as does every great national project, is to be conceded, although the extent of this damage is probably exaggerated. New facilities create new business, and far from hurting the railroads and ports of the Northern Atlantic States, the waterway is likely to help them. The argument of Senator Wagner of New York that our wheat trade is diminishing and that therefore we should not increase facilities for it would be sound if the waterway were intended only for wheat. The fact is that the waterway will further all kinds of commerce. Virtually it will bring the Atlantic Ocean 1,000 miles inland, making seaports of cities in the Mississippi Valley and putting a new empire in touch by water with the world at large. Not only should it help the much-needed revival of our foreign trade, but it will be of vast service in domestic intercommunication.

Those who seek to create prejudice against the project on the ground that our money is to go to Canadian workmen are on insecure ground. On October 20, last, Brigadier General G. B. Pillsbury, acting chief of army engineers, wrote to Frank P. Walsh, chairman of the Power Authority of the State of New York:

> In accordance with your request for information on the percentage of funds furnished by the United States under the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty which will be expended for American labor, materials, etc., I take pleasure in advising you that of the total estimated expenditures of American funds of $257,992,000 for both navigation and power works, approximately 80 per cent will be expended by United States engineers and United States labor and with United States material. The remainder, under the terms of sub-paragraph (b) of Article III of the treaty, will be for work executed by Canadian engineers and Canadian labor and with Canadian material for works within Canadian territory to be constructed by the temporary St. Lawrence–International Rapids Section Commission. Approximately 60 per cent of the total cost will be expended on works in the State of New York.

If there are some who ask why even a fraction of the expenditures should go to Canadian labor, they should remember that of the three rapids in the St. Lawrence River, Canada is undertaking to build the locks for two entirely at its own expense, as well as doing a fair share of other work toward deepening the present waterway.

The power possibilities of the waterway are not less important than its navigational advantages. As we pointed out on December 27, it is proposed to develop more power from the St. Lawrence rapids along the international boundary—to be divided equally between Canada and the United States—than is at present contemplated at Muscle Shoals and Boulder Dam combined. This, of course, is the reason for the secret utility campaign against the waterway.

As President Roosevelt reminded the country in his message, the waterway *is going to be built*. If the United States does not participate, the work will be done eventually by Canada alone. Thus navigational facilities—which will be limited—would be available to the United States only to the extent that Canada did not want them.

A Neglected Art

DO you, dear reader, happen to know that many royal hides—including those of King Edward VII, King George V, Czar Nicholas II, and Queen Olga of Greece—are or were tastefully ornamented with designs in tattoo? If you do not, and if—what is perhaps less likely—you are ashamed of such ignorance, then Albert Parry has just published the book for you. You will discover that in his volume called "Tattoo" he provides a rich store of useful information. There are, for instance, times when any one of us might need to know that the possession of an indecorous emblem is sufficient to bar a sailor from reenlistment in the United States navy, or that at least one American court has decided that a gentleman who has seen an innocent design on a lady's thigh is justified in regarding her as a woman of immoral life—even though it is subsequently proved that she was innocence itself.

Mr. Parry's researches take him into the fields of psychology, anthropology, and aesthetics as well as into the records of history. The circus, the jail, the brothel, and the man-of-war interest him no less than the royal courts, and he introduces us to the leading American practitioners of the art as well as to their patrons. What is more, he points with proper pride to the fact that in our country the wickedness of our bad men and women is—literally—not even skin deep. Our prostitutes go in for true love knots, our sentimental criminals are embroidered with tributes to their mothers, and it is only in corrupt Europe that one is likely to find a lawbreaker like a certain Frenchman who had a blue circle about his neck with the inscription, "Executioner, cut on the dotted line."

We shall pass hastily over the fact that a nameless American collector is accustomed to enter into arrangements with the possessors of works which strike his fancy, and that by virtue of these arrangements he has a choice collection of segments of skin which came into his possession by legal process after the death of the original owner. We shall also allude only in passing to the history of a young lady who grew so tired of her career as a typist that she had herself engraved all over for the express purpose of joining a circus. But there is one story so rich in human interest that we must tell it in full.

It seems that there was a certain sailor whose chest, back, and arms had been transformed into a veritable salon of graceful nudes. When, bared to the waist, he worked at his tasks on deck he was both the admiration and the solace of his laboring companions, who forgot their chanteys while they studied art. One day, however, he took to himself a wife of puritanical temperament, and when next the gallery was open to the public the unfortunate results of a censorship were evident: each figure had been newly provided with a brassière and a skirt. There is, we know, a persistent legend to the effect that after Turner's death Ruskin destroyed a great quantity of drawings which offended his sense of decency. We are also familiar with the undisputed fact that Lady Burton burned the manuscript upon which her deceased husband had been laboring for years. But these victims were presumably beyond caring about earthly things. Our sailor had to choose between love and art, and love won.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Issues and Men

The Crucial Months Ahead

THESE are crucial months which lie ahead of us between now and July, especially for the President. By the end of the first half of 1934 we shall know how certain expedients are going to work, and whether the fundamental question, Can a depression be cured by wholesale spending? will be answered affirmatively. Will the gold and silver purchases and other currency experiments or the NRA itself finally raise the level of prices? Will there be continuing reemployment? Will the lot of the farmer improve, or is he profiting—where and when he profits—solely by the direct payments the Treasury is making to him? Are those pessimists correct who say, like John T. Flynn, that there has been no improvement whatever except that created by the government spending? These and various other questions must be answered soon. I fear it is undeniable that if we reach July 1 without substantial changes we shall be measurably in sight of some considerable currency inflation.

For the Administration this period will be the severest test. Mr. Roosevelt will have to use all his suave skill and tact not only in heading off the silver fanatics and those who favor paying off the entire national debt in greenbacks, but in coping with those, like Senator Borah, who are on the rampage once more in the matter of the Allied debts. During this period we shall learn how well the President has selected his personal advisers, and whether the theories of the latter are sound. His subordinates will have finally to prove just how capable they are as administrators, as co-ordinators, and as field generals in carrying out the policies of the President. Some of them are already the subject of increasing criticism, and their efficiency and wisdom are being doubted—notably in the case of the Postmaster-General. General Johnson himself has said that the greatest need now is to get the various administrators of the several branches of the recovery plan to "click together." Much will depend on the progress of the agricultural-relief campaign during the coming months. Again, there are new problems always coming up. How, for example, are the railroads to raise the $2,300,000,000 they need to refinance security issues maturing this year? How are the $10,000,000,000 of new government securities to be sold within six months' time in such a way as not seriously to damage the government's credit? And can the government bring itself to a definite policy in the matter of the tariff, as suggested by Secretary Hull at Montevideo and Secretary Wallace in his Midwestern speeches, and outlined in part by the Executive Commercial Policy Committee? If so, is there a chance that Congress will give to the President the unlimited power to raise, or lower, or abolish tariffs which the committee apparently desires him to have?

As to the banking situation, no one can assert that it is satisfactory. There are still approximately 3,200 closed banks, and it is no secret that of those that are open many are being kept going by RFC aid, that others are in trouble, and that numerous others would be put out of business if State laws as to the valuation of the securities in their portfolios should be enforced. I am delighted to see that one section of the President's "brain trust" is at work on a study of the possibilities of an extension of the Postal Savings system so that there may be increased deposits and small checking accounts. The latest figures show that the government now has no less than $1,187,186,208 on deposit, whereas two years ago it had only $347,416,870. In other words, the deposits show a growth in two years of 230 per cent.

During the same time the number of depositors has increased from 1,545,190 to 2,342,133. Obviously, if the $2,500 limit were taken off, the sum on deposit would again be increased, and would provide an additional market for the government securities which must be issued in such large amounts. A. A. Berle, Jr., has just said that we must have a unified banking structure under the control of the federal government, a savings-bank system with a mortgage-rediscount bank at its head to provide liquidity, and a system of large regional banks with branches covering great areas of the country. But as Harry W. Laidler asked him: "Isn't it logical for the government to go farther, acquire control of the entire banking system, and run it wholly for the service of the community?" The President must take a position on this before very long.

If we turn to the foreign field, there are not only the questions of the tariff, especially in regard to South America, and of the debts, which the President has deliberately allowed to drift; there is the vexed question of currency stabilization, which sooner or later will have to be settled. It cannot be settled in any way without affecting our foreign relations. One act of the President has done more to injure American standing abroad than any other of the many singular and inconsistent acts to our credit and discredit since the conclusion of peace. That is, of course, the dishonoring of the gold clause in our bonds. This has aroused a fury against us in Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland such as we have not witnessed before. Sooner or later the President, if he is wise, will find a way of rescinding that order, especially since the decision of the House of Lords in the recent Belgian case has upset a precedent which the defenders of the President's acts had cited as his justification. One thing is certain, we cannot play the moralist and abuse foreign nations for failing to pay the debts that they owe us in the face of this dishonorable breaking of our pledged word.

Upon the outcome of these next fateful months may even depend the future structure of our government, and whether we shall find ourselves face to face with a full-fledged fascist movement in this country. At least we can agree upon one thing in wishing the President all possible success in his program and also the very best of health for the tremendously arduous days which lie before him.

Oswald Garrison Villard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Art" and the Ad Man

By JAMES RORTY

SINCE advertising is essentially a traffic in belief, the profession habitually takes the name of Truth, though usually in vain. And since Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, the profession is also forever rendering vain oblations at the shrine of Beauty.

This worship has two major phases. The first is the manufacture, by advertising, of successive exploitable concepts of feminine beauty, of beauty in clothes, houses, furniture, automobiles, kitchens, everything. The second phase of this worship has to do with the ad man's view of his own craft, and would appear to represent, in part at least, a perversion of the normal human instinct of workmanship.

For some reason it is thought necessary for the ad man not merely to sell the idea of beauty but to sell beauty beautifully. It is contended that an attractively designed advertisement of an allegedly beautiful toilet seat is more effective than an ugly advertisement of the same object. But this has never been proved conclusively. On the contrary, there are many examples of very ugly advertising which has been exceptionally effective. Yet the desire for beauty in advertising is inextinguishable and has more or less had its way. Fifteen years ago the well-designed newspaper or magazine advertisement was the exception; today it is the rule. Has the effectiveness of advertising increased proportionately? On the contrary, it has decreased, and one of the factors in this decline is undoubtedly the increased cost of producing this economically superfluous beauty in advertising. There is, of course, a recognized and demonstrated commercial justification for using expensive "art" and expensive typography in the advertising of certain luxury products such as perfumes, de luxe motor cars, and the like. The principle is that of "conspicuous waste," used to create an ambience, a prestige, for the product which will lift it above the rational level of price competition. But as many hard-boiled professionals have often protested, beauty has been permitted to run hog-wild in contemporary advertising practice. Carroll Rheinstrom estimates that 90 per cent of current advertising is waste because of the ad man's preoccupation with his techniques to the exclusion of practical economic considerations.

No, the logical economic explanations don't make sense. Advertising today is often inefficient precisely *because* it is far better designed and written than it needs to be; certainly it costs far more to produce than it ought to cost. Part of the explanation, I think, lies in a private impurity of the advertising craftsman; he is more interested in beauty than he is in selling. For him the advertisement is a thing in itself. Highly developed craftsmanship in the graphic arts and in writing, enormous expenditures of mechanical skill are deposited at the shrine not of Mammon but of Beauty. And all pretty much in vain. The art isn't really art. The writing isn't really writing. And frequently the worst "art" and the worst "writing" sell products better than the best art and the best writing. The explanation of this curious phenomenon may well be that advertising, since it doesn't make sense in economic, social, or human terms, jumps right through the looking-glass and becomes a thing in itself!

It takes a naive eye to see this. I had to have it pointed out to me by a poet friend who makes his living writing prose for a commercial magazine. He picked up a copy of the publication and pointed to a Camel cigarette advertisement in color. "How much did that cost?" he asked. I estimated rapidly—$1,000 for the drawing, add $200 for the time of the art director and an assistant, $400 for the color plates, $100 for typography, $100 more for miscellaneous mechanical charges, $100 for copy, $300 pro rated for executive and management charges. Total for one advertisement, not counting the cost of the space, about $2,300.

"Well," commented my poet friend, "that's what it's all for, isn't it? That's why Kentucky planters go bankrupt growing tobacco, why Negro and white share-croppers sweat, starve, and revolt, why millions of men and women diligently smoke billions of cigarettes—all so that this magnificent advertisement might be born and live its little hour."

My friend was treating himself to a little poetic license of course. But the more I stared at the phenomenon, the more I became convinced that it made just as much sense upside down as the right side up. And the more I reflected upon the role of the "creative worker" in advertising, the more I came to suspect skullduggery of an obscure, unconscious sort. Ostensibly these craftsmen are employed to write words and draw lines that will persuade their fellowman to buy certain branded cigarettes, soaps, tooth pastes, and gadgets. But do these artists really give a whoop about these gadgets and gargles or whether people buy them or not? Did I, when I was a member in good standing of the profession? Never a whoop or a whisper. What I cared about was my craft, and that is what every genuine craftsman cares about—that and nothing else. Each piece of copy was a thing in itself. I did a workman-like job, not for dear old Heinz, or Himmelschlussel, or Rockefeller, or whomever I was serving indirectly, but for myself; because it was pleasant to do a competent job and unpleasant to do a slovenly job. I was aware, of course, that Mr. Rockefeller, via the agency, was paying me, and I tried not to get fired. But I never worried about my duty to Mr. Rockefeller and to his oils and gadgets. The prospect, the customer? I was a bit sorry for the customer, and tried to let him off with as little bamboozlement as possible. But my real loyalty was to the Word, to the materials of my craft.

My indomitable instinct of workmanship was hard on my employer. Unconsciously I sabotaged his interests every day. I tried to write clean, lucid prose, when the clumsy screed that the advertiser wanted to print would probably have sold more goods. When my immediate superior plaintively objected that what I wrote was too good for the audience to which it was addressed, I was indignant and recalcitrant. Ordered to rewrite the advertisement, I seized the opportunity to bring it closer to my standard of craftsmanship, which had nothing to do with commerce. If the client objected, I bullied him if possible; otherwise I made a minimum of grudging concessions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A percentage of the copy writers in advertising agencies are craftsmen. I have known scores of them. They felt as I felt, and consciously or unconsciously they did what I did. The artists were even more obsessed and obstreperous. As I knew them, their disinterestedness in the profits of Mr. Rockefeller was extreme. They were interested in drawing pretty pictures. As craftsmen they drew them as well as they could, regardless of the advertiser and what he had asked them to draw. Naturally, the picture had to convey a sales message, and they chattered a great deal about "putting a selling punch" in their pictures. But I noticed that the best of them became so interested in the design and the drawing that they frequently left no room for the copy or even for the trademark of the manufacturer. When account executives and advertisers repined at such extravagant oblations at the shrine of Beauty, the artists were haughtier even than the copy writers. And since the average American business man has a puzzled and diffident reverence for art, coupled with an enormous ignorance of the nature of artists, their motivations and techniques, these so-called "commercial" artists did then and still do get away with an astonishing amount of sheer mayhem and murder. The writers did, too, though to a less degree, because most advertisers can read and write. All account executives in agencies and, worse still, all advertisers have an obscene itch to write themselves. Consequently the copy writer must sternly and vigilantly keep these vulgarians in their places. I always considered it to be my duty to stand on my dignity as a "genius"—the word still goes big in the world of commerce, especially on the West Coast—partly as a matter of self-respect, and partly as a practical measure of professional aggrandizement.

Does this seem exaggerated? But how can the honest chronicler record fantasy except in the terms of fantasy? And the vast accumulation of advertising during the post-war decade was fantastic in the extreme. It is still fantastic. Look at it in the pages of any commercial magazine. Does it make sense in terms of the sober, profit-motivated business that advertising is supposed to be?

Recently the investigators of the Psychological Corporation discovered that the variation between advertisements of lowest and highest effectiveness runs as high as 1,000 per cent. An automobile assembly line is considered poor if it permits a quality variation of more than 30 per cent. Is it sensible to believe that a production technique which shows 1,000 per cent variation in the quality of the product is really aimed at its avowed objective, namely, the sale of products and services to customers?

To understand this phenomenon we must employ a far subtler analysis, giving all the factors their due weight, no matter how fantastic they are, and no matter how seemingly irrational the conclusion to which we are led. Veblen furnishes us with the essential clue. In his "Theory of Business Enterprise" and elsewhere Veblen notes that advertising is one element of the "conscientious sabotage" by which business keeps the endlessly procreative force of science-in-industry from breaking the chains of the profit system. In this view the business man figures as an art-for-art's-saker. His art is the making of money, which has nothing to do with the use of the productive forces by which a society gains its livelihood. The art of making money is perhaps the purest, the most irrational art we know, and its practitioners are utterly intransigent. Today these artists in money-making are prepared to starve millions of people, to plunge the planet in war, to destroy civilization itself rather than compromise the purity of their art.

Veblen saw all this clearly, and Stuart Chase has employed the Veblenian opposition of business and industry in a sequence of useful books. What both failed to see, however, is that the contradictions of capitalism persist even within the mental gears and pistons of its functionaries.

Business sabotages industry by means of advertising. True. But we, as advertising craftsmen consciously or unconsciously motivated not by a desire to make money but by an obsessed delight in the materials of our craft, we in turn sabotaged advertising. We were and are parasites and unconscious saboteurs. During the whole post-war decade we gathered strength, inflated our prestige, consolidated our power. More and more the "creative worker" became the dominant force in agency practice, and advertising consequently became more and more "pure." The shrine of Beauty was buried under the fruits and flowers placed there by devout artists and writers in advertising. We were no humble starvelings. We caused the salaries and fees paid advertising artists and writers to become notorious. Agency production costs hit the ceiling, broke through, and sailed off into the empyrean. We developed an aesthetic of advertising art and copy, a philosophy, a variety of equally fantastic creeds—a whole rich literature of rationalization which should interest the psychiatrists greatly if they ever get around to examining it.

I say "we" with poetic license. I speak for the profession, but I speak without authorization, and I shall doubtless be roundly repudiated and condemned by the menagerie of Cheshire Cats, March Hares, Mad Hatters, and Red Queens who still roam the scant pastures on the other side, the *right* side, of the advertising looking-glass. As a matter of fact I contributed nothing to this literature of rationalization. I was too busy making a living, trying to keep sane and do a little serious work on the side, and wondering just how soon that beautiful iridescent bubble would break, leaving us "creative workers" with nothing much in our hands and a lot of soap in our eyes.

It broke. Came Black Thursday, and a chill wind blew through the advertising rookeries of the Grand Central district. Advertising appropriations were cut. That exquisite First Article of the ad man's credo, "When business is good it pays to advertise; when business is bad you've got to advertise," was invoked with less and less effect. As the months and years passed the whole structure of the industry began to sideslip and sway. *And advertising became less pure.* That beautiful, haughty odalisque had to hustle down into the market-place and drag in the customers. She had to speak of price. She became dowdy and blatant and vulgar. The primitive technique of Hogarth in the eighteenth century was resurrected via the tabloids, and moronic sales talk issued in ugly balloons from the mouths of ugly moronic figures. Photography was cheaper than drawings and worked as well or better. Testimonials were cheap and worked best of all. Every time car loadings hit a new low, another big advertiser would go buckeye with testimonials and other loathsome practices.

It occurs to me that in discussing the role of the craftsman in advertising I may have given the impression that his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"conscientious sabotage," his interest in the materials of the craft rather than in selling, his attempts to convert advertising into a thing in itself, represent a genuine release of creative capacity. No such impression was intended. If any genuine creation goes on in advertising agencies I have never seen it. I have seen the sort of thing described—the crippled, grotesque make-believe of more or less competent craftsmen who played with the materials of their craft but could never use them in advertising for any creative purpose. By and large there is no such thing as art in advertising any more than there is such a thing as an advertising literature. There is merely sterile virtuosity turned inward because of the impossibility of making art out of the prescribed subject matter. On the door of the art department of an agency where I worked, a friend of mine, one of the ablest and most prolific commercial artists in the business, once tacked a sign. It read: "Fetid Hell-Hole of Lost Souls." There are many hundreds of these fetid hell-holes in the major cities of America. The inmates are of course dedicated to beauty, beauty in advertising. Whether they know it or not, they are, as artists, so many squeaking, tortured eunuchs. The sultans of business pay them well or not so well. They have made sure that they do not fertilize the body of the culture with the dangerous seed of art.

Freedom of Speech

By CARL BECKER

The worth of men consists in their liability to persuasion.
WHITEHEAD

I

THE NATION'S recent affirmation of faith in freedom of speech called forth an unusual number of protests, not against the principle, but against an unlimited application of it. A reexamination of the liberal doctrine is always in order, but never more so than now. The times are such that every liberal may well ask himself, not so much how far he is willing to carry the principle of free speech, but rather how far the principle is capable of carrying him.

It seems necessary to ask what we mean by freedom of speech, since people often have disconcerting ideas about it. A woman once asked me what all the pother was about. Weren't people always free to say what they thought? Of course one must be prepared to face the consequences. I didn't know the answer to that one. Last summer a Columbia University student explained to me that all governments, being based on force, were dictatorships, and that there was no more freedom of speech in the U. S. A. than in the U. S. S. R., the only difference being in the things one was permitted to say. I suggested that, supposing freedom of speech to be a good thing, a poor way of getting more of it than we already had would be to adopt a philosophy which denied that it was worth having. The editors of *The Nation* do not say that the laws guaranteeing freedom of speech are always effective. They say that freedom of speech, as defined in our fundamental law, is the foundation of free government, and should therefore never be denied to anyone—"even to the Nazis."

The fundamental law guaranteeing freedom of speech was well formulated in the Virginia constitution of 1780: "Any person may speak, write, and publish his sentiments on any subject, being responsible for the abuse [as defined by law] of that liberty." As thus defined, freedom of speech was the principal tenet of the eighteenth-century doctrine of liberal democracy. Its validity, for those who formulated it, rested upon presuppositions which may be put in the form of a syllogism. *Major premise:* The sole method of arriving at truth is the application of human reason to the problems presented by the universe and the life of men in it. *Minor premise:* Men are rational creatures who can easily grasp and will gladly accept the truth once it is disclosed to them. *Conclusion:* By allowing men freedom of speech and the press, relevant knowledge will be made accessible, untrammeled discussion will reconcile divergent interests and opinions, and laws acceptable to all will be enacted. To the early prophets of democracy the syllogism seemed irrefutable; but to us, in the light of liberal democracy as we know it, the minor premise is obviously false, the conclusion invalid. There remains the major premise. What can we do with it?

II

The major premise, with reservations as to "human reason," we can accept—must do so in fact, since there is nothing else to cling to. Even if reason be not always Reason, even if, like Hitler, we have nothing better than our blood to think with, we must make the most of whatever thinking we can muster. "All our dignity," said Pascal, "consists in thought. Endeavor then to think well: that is the essence of morality." It was by taking thought that man first differentiated himself from the beasts; by taking more thought that he achieved whatever men have, by taking thought, judged worthy. What more he may achieve can be achieved, and whether it is worthy can be determined, only by taking still more thought. Since men must in any case think, and do what they think of doing, it seems axiomatic to say that they should be free to think and to express their thoughts as well as they can.

Nevertheless, the statement is not axiomatic—obviously not, since, if it were, *The Nation* would not bother to print articles about it. There is a catch somewhere. Perhaps we are too prone to think of freedom of speech in terms of Man and Speech. This was the way in which eighteenth-century liberals thought of it. Confronted with a social regime which hedged in the individual at every point, they found the obvious solution in the maximum of liberty for the individual—political liberty, economic liberty, liberty of speech and the press. Knowing little of these liberties in the concrete, they visualized them as ideal abstractions, so that all the spacious but unfurnished chambers in the Temple of Freedom could be brilliantly illuminated by turning on certain phrases—as, for example, Voltaire's epigram: "I disagree absolutely with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." Liberals still think of liberty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

somewhat too much in the eighteenth-century manner. Give us, in a mental test, the words "free speech," and we are apt to recall Voltaire's epigram, which then fades into a picture of two amiable, elderly gentlemen engaged in a rational discussion of the existence of the Deity.

Voltaire's epigram expresses a profound truth in the ideal world of knowledge. It would be equally relevant to the world of practical activities if society were a debating club of well-intentioned and reasonable men in which speech, being the only form of action, issued in nothing more dangerous than abstract propositions about reality. Since the activities of men are diverse, the ideal of a debating club is sometimes nearly realized. Mathematical physicists, discussing the nature of the atom, enjoy (at least in this country) the utmost freedom of speech without having (as yet) to call upon *The Nation* for first aid. Economists, historians, even biologists are more likely to encounter obstacles, since their activities have a more direct bearing on practical affairs. Where the principle of free speech has to fight for its life is in the realm of concrete political activities. Since the eighteenth century we have learned at least this much, that society is something more than a debating club of reasonable men in search of the truth. We know what use men actually make of their liberties. We are therefore in a position to estimate the principle of free speech in terms, not of Man and Speech, but of men and speeches—in terms of the best that has been thought and said by the Honorable Members we have elected, the Attorney-Generals we have known, the Insulls we have suffered, the fruity-throated announcers who, every day, for a profit, avail themselves of the Liberty of Lying.

Estimated in terms of its concrete manifestations, the principle of free speech is resolved into a diversity of oral and printed utterances, some of which need to be suppressed. No one has ever thought otherwise. Even the editors of *The Nation* do not approve of the freedom of speech that issues in slander and libel. Do they approve of the freedom of speech that issues in the lynching of Negroes? In the sale of poisoned cosmetics? The sale of worthless stock to honest but gullible people? They would say that of course there are, as the Virginia constitution recognizes, "abuses" to be defined by law; but that unless the law is careful, the definition may be a greater abuse than the speech it suppresses. True enough: the law is always in danger of being "a ass." But as soon as abuses appear, the principle of free speech is merged in another and broader principle: "Liberty is the right of everyone to do whatever does not injure others"; and we are at once confronted with the fundamental practical problem of all government: What individual acts, including the act that is speech, do here and now injure others?

By no formulation of principles beforehand can answers to this question be provided for concrete situations. The answers must wait on experience. Experience has taught us, or surely will teach us, that the eighteenth-century solution for social ills will no longer serve. Economic liberty, which was to have brought about equality of conditions, has contrived, with the aid of machines, to bring about a monstrous inequality of conditions. That there are rich and poor is nothing new, nor even disastrous. What is disastrous is that a great part of social wealth is owned by the many who do not control it, and controlled by the few who do not own it. Having well learned this, liberals find the obvious solution for social ills not in extending but in restricting the economic liberty of the individual. What we have not learned, or not sufficiently, is that the economic liberty of the individual is intimately associated with his political liberty, and that both are associated with his liberty of speech and the press. It will prove extremely difficult to restrict the one without restricting the others.

The speech that is socially vicious, to the point of endangering all our liberties, functions chiefly as an instrument of the competitive "business" economy. Such an instrument it has always been, no doubt; but never before so important an instrument, for the reason that modern methods of communicating thought are more subtle and effective than any ever before known, while the verification of the truth or relevance of the thought so communicated is far more difficult. The result is that there issues daily from the press and the radio a deluge of statements that are false in fact or misleading in implication, that are made for no other purpose than to fool most of the people most of the time for the economic advantage of a few of the people all of the time. This steady stream of falsification is called by various names which smell, if not too sweet, at least not foul—"advertising," "propaganda," "selling the public." Selling the public is an exact description of what is essential to the "successful" conduct of "business"—so essential that it is itself a business; and not the least of its evil consequences is that it is creating a state of mind disposed to regard anything as O.K. if you can get by with it. This manifestation of free speech is a far greater menace to liberal democracy than the freest dissemination of an alien political philosophy by Nazis or Communists is ever likely to be; and the only defense for it is that to restrict it would endanger the principle of free speech.

III

The danger is chiefly verbal, since the practical problem carries us beyond the speech we condemn to the practical activities that occasion it. The evil cannot of course be cured by creating a board of censors pledged to exclude lies from oral discourse and printed matter. But neither can it be cured by waiting while truth crushed to earth pulls itself up and assembles its battered armor. In the competitive business economy, as it now operates, those who largely control and extensively use the avenues of expression are not seeking truth but profits; and freedom of speech will not cease to be used for purposes that are socially vicious until it ceases to be profitable so to use it. It would seem, then, that the essential thing is either to abolish the profit motive or divert it into socially useful channels. Communists and fascists confidently assert that neither of these objects can be attained through the liberal democratic political mechanism. They may be right. Liberals who think otherwise must at least take account of a disturbing fact: the liberal democratic political mechanism functions by enacting into law the common will that emerges from free discussion. Thus the circle seems completed: for curing the evil effects of free speech we must rely upon a public opinion formed in large part by the speech that is evil.

The editors of *The Nation* admit that the situation is full of "uncomfortable possibilities," but they hold to the traditional liberal method of meeting them—the promotion, by appealing from free speech drunk to free speech sober, of a "healthy movement to the left." The uncomfortable possi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bilities, as seen by *The Nation*, are that "continued economic decline," and the "demand of a despairing people for drastic action," may enable a "well-directed [Nazi] propaganda" [free speech] to bring about the "triumph of fascism . . . with all its attendant horrors." Another uncomfortable possibility, as I see it, is that the "healthy" movement to the left may become "unhealthy," and end in the triumph of communism with all its attendant horrors. Among the attendant horrors, in either case, *The Nation* would no doubt include, as one of the drastic actions demanded by a despairing people, the drastic suppression of free speech as a political method. The logical dilemma involved in free speech for political objects is therefore this: if social ills cannot be alleviated by the democratic method of free speech, this very freedom of speech will be used by those whose avowed aim is the abolition of the democratic method, and free speech as a part of it. Am I expected to be loyal to the principle of free speech to the point of standing by while, writhing in pain among its worshipers, it commits suicide? It is asking a lot.

It is asking too much only so long as we remain in the realm of logical discourse. In demanding the privilege of free speech from a liberal government in order to convince its citizens that free speech is a present evil, neither Nazis nor Communists have any standing in logic. Their programs, so far as the preliminaries of social reform are concerned at least, are based on an appeal to force rather than to persuasion. Very well, since that is their program, let us cease talking, resort to force, and see which is the stronger. Their own principles teach us that it is logical for them to resist oppression but merely impudent to resent it. Nevertheless, the logic of events is not very logical, and I see no practical virtue in a syllogistic solution of the problem presented by Nazi and Communist propaganda. The freedom of speech which by their own logic I deny them, I am therefore quite willing to concede them in fact.

I concede it because, for one thing, there is a bare chance that the Nazis, or the Communists, or both of them may be, as they seem to claim, true prophets whom the world would not willingly have stoned—agents of the God Woden or the Dialectic duly accredited and predestined to establish truth and justice by a ruthless suppression of oppressors. I should dislike very much to put myself in opposition to the forces, not of persuasion, that make for righteousness, apart from the fact that it would be futile to do so if they are in any case to triumph. But perhaps a better reason for conceding freedom of speech to Nazis and Communists is that freedom of speech can neither be suppressed by argument nor maintained by suppressing argument. The principle of free speech must justify itself or go under. The real danger, from the liberal point of view, is not that Nazis and Communists will destroy liberal democracy by free speaking, but that liberal democracy, through its own failure to cure social ills, will destroy itself by breeding Nazis and Communists. If liberal democracy can sufficiently alleviate social ills, freedom of speech will have sufficiently justified itself; if not, freedom of speech will in any case be lost in the shuffle.

Whatever may be the virtues of freedom of speech in the abstract world of ideas, as a rule of political action it is like any other law—it works well only if the conditions are favorable. It works not too badly in a society in which the material conditions of life, being relatively easy, create no radical conflicts of interest, and in which there exists a common tradition of moral and social ideas, one of which is that just government rests upon the consent, freely expressed and freely given, of the governed. A long-time view of human civilization discloses the fact that such favorable conditions have existed only in a few places or for short times. Experience gives us slight ground for supposing that nineteenth-century liberal democracy is a permanent conquest of intelligence. It may very well be but a passing phase, a cumbersome and extravagant form of government, practicable only in relatively simple agricultural societies suddenly dowered with unaccustomed wealth by the discovery of new instruments of power and the invention of new machines.

Present events do little to discredit this view. Certain European countries have already abandoned liberal democracy—gladly by all accounts—for one or another form of dictatorship. Even in this Land of the Free there are developing, under the pressure of continued economic distress, significant movements to the left and to the right. These movements can surely not be checked by declaring a quarantine—by pronouncing them "unhealthy," and closing the mouths of Nazis and Communists in order to prevent the spread of verbal infection. They can be checked only by removing the economic confusion and distress on which they thrive. Perhaps this can be done by the methods of liberal democracy. Perhaps not. If not, it needs no prophet to tell us that sooner or later a "despairing people" will demand "drastic action." The demand may assume the voice of communism, or of fascism, or of both. It may conceivably lead to another "irreconcilable conflict," similar to that of 1861. Outmoded liberals would not then need, any more than they did in 1861, to ask whether they should abandon the principle of free speech, since the principle of free speech would already have abandoned them. The logic of events would present them—perhaps is already, without their knowing it, presenting them—with nothing better than that choice of evils which liberals always have to face in times when arms speak and laws are silent, the choice of joining one uncongenial armed camp or the other.

There would, it is true, be another way out for any liberal who wished to take it. Any man might in desperation cry, "A plague on both your houses!" Withdrawing from the world of affairs, he might, as a non-resistant pacifist, still exercise the right of private judgment, having deliberately fortified himself to face, as the woman said, "the consequences." In short, he might, as a last refuge from imbecility, turn Christian and practice the precept that it is better to suffer evil than to do it. In that elevated spiritual retreat he would have leisure to meditate the bitter truth of Pascal's profound commonplace: "It is *right* to follow that which is just, it is *necessary* to follow that which is stronger."

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

January 24, WEVD, 8:15 p.m.

Radio listeners will not be able to hear Mr. Villard speak over the radio after this date until his return, about April 1, from an extensive lecture tour to the Pacific Coast.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Deal at Montevideo

By SAMUEL GUY INMAN

Montevideo, December 26

TO an old stager at Pan-American conferences the difference between the atmosphere of Montevideo and the preceding conferences was nothing less than astounding. The first conference at Washington in 1889 lasted five months, mainly because of the interminable disputes between the United States and Argentina. In every succeeding conference up to the present there has been a threatening Latin American bloc which looked with suspicion on every North American move. Well do I remember during the Fifth Conference at Santiago in 1923 the combination of fourteen Latin American countries to compel a reorganization of the Pan-American Union in order to give more place for Latin American countries and bring about less dominance by the United States. The few concessions granted, after long and painful waiting to hear from Washington, during which delay committee meetings were postponed from day to day, were ungraciously made. Latin American delegations and newspapers were practically unanimous in condemning the superior attitude assumed by the chief of the American delegation, Mr. Fletcher, and his group of lame-duck Senators. "I got all I came after," was the way Mr. Fletcher summed up to me his supposed victories, following the conference. So incensed was Latin America over the optimistic report of our delegation to President Harding that Dr. Estanislao Zeballo of Argentina, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave an entire address at the next Williamstown Institute on what he called "the optimistic report of the United States delegation, which does not reveal to that country in the least the sad plight of Pan-Americanism resulting from the Santiago conference."

At Havana in 1928 the same sullen resentment against the United States was evident, although the imperious personality of Charles Evans Hughes kept down the smoldering fires except for a few outbursts which occurred especially in the closing session, when, as the question of intervention finally thrust itself into the limelight, the discussion took such an ugly turn that much of it had to be erased from the record. As if to confirm the suspicions of Latin America, the United States delegation went to Havana on a battleship in company with President Coolidge, who vied with the dictator Machado in such extravagant mutual eulogies that the Cuban government almost forgot the presence of the Latin American delegates.

Throughout the conference there were all kinds of protests against the United States. The head of the Argentine delegation resigned during the conference because of his differences with Mr. Hughes, and suddenly one day, exasperated by the tricks used to avert a discussion of intervention, every Latin American delegation heatedly declared against such tactics on the part of the United States.

At Santiago, Mexico was not represented because of the profound differences with the United States, and Peru and Bolivia sent no delegates because they felt that the United States had favored Chile in the Tacna and Arica question. The shadow of Mexico rested over every act of the Santiago conference and balked the American delegation at every turn. On the other hand, a Mexican delegate said to me here in Montevideo, "We had to come to this conference to find out how much nearer we are to the United States of America than to Argentina and these other South American countries." On two occasions Dr. Puig, Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, made an extended address concerning the hope offered to Latin America by the new policy of the Roosevelt Administration. The first was after Secretary Hull had made his proposal to reduce tariffs all around on the American continent and to work out bilateral agreements between all American countries, as the United States and Colombia have recently done. This proposal in itself reversed completely the position of Mr. Hughes at Havana when he blocked Argentina's effort to have the Pan-American Union consider economic questions.

When Puig seconded Hull's tariff proposal he did it not because he was sure that Hull and his chief would be able to carry it out, for with the London conference and the farmers' strikes before them Latin American delegates are quite skeptical over the possibility of any general lowering of tariffs in the United States. But the Roosevelt Administration is making a great experiment which, if carried out, will mean new social justice not only in the United States but also for all Latin America. "This New Deal," continued Dr. Puig, "which will mean profound social, economic, and political revision (for this very reason opposed so tenaciously by selfish interests in the United States), needs and should command the unanimous support of this Pan-American assembly."

Here is the real reason that the Seventh Pan-American Conference has had the most favorable atmosphere for cooperation between the north and south of any of the series of congresses since the first meeting at Washington in 1889. The Roosevelt Administration has already shown its resistance to the old policies of dictating what legislation other countries ought to have and using marines to enforce its will. Even if the present Cuban government has not yet been recognized and American collectors of customs are still in Haiti and Santo Domingo, the refusal to land marines in Cuba and the agreement to withdraw them completely from Haiti by October, 1934, thus leaving no shadow of military occupation in any Latin American country, have made a deep impression on our southern neighbors. But a still deeper impression has been made by what is happening in the United States itself. The nations of Latin America believe that the people and government of the United States are turning from their complete trust in money and attempting to build a new order where social justice is the first consideration. For it seems at times that the Latin Americans distrust us not only because of our imperialist program but because of their feeling that big business controls all of our life and purposes. As Dr. Puig says, "This new program we hope is not simply a New Deal but a whole new pack of cards."

The United States could have found no one better fitted to transmit to Latin America the ideas of the new policy than the fine type of Southern gentleman represented by the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Secretary of State. The very fact that he is so different from the brilliant, overpowering, imperious Hughes, who headed the American delegation at Havana, or the astute career diplomat Fletcher, who led the lame-duck Senators at Santiago, is his greatest attraction for Latin America. Outside of Dwight Morrow in Mexico no American who has visited Latin America since the memorable visit of Elihu Root in 1906 has made such a favorable impression. Mr. Hull's almost naive simplicity, after all the slick and big-stick diplomats and bankers, is the most commendable trait possible. When, on the first day of his arrival in Montevideo, in a business suit, accompanied only by his secretary, he began to call on each of the heads of the Latin American delegations, ignoring all formality, revealing his great desire first of all for peace in the Chaco, he walked straight into the hearts of Latin Americans. When he declared a few days later that the Roosevelt Administration had no idea of getting behind the international bankers to help them collect their debts and that it disassociated itself from high finance, he entered still further into South American affections. His declarations concerning tariffs, while received with caution and wonder as to how far he could make good, aroused still more appreciation of his own friendly attitude. His statement on peace and the new political attitude of the United States on the American continent, made later on that same day, was a triumph for simplicity and sincerity.

Hull's address on Pan-American peace was made at an afternoon session of the Commission on Peace Machinery in the same impressive *sala* where the discussion on economics had taken place in the morning; there was thus on one day a square look at two big questions out of some twenty-eight on the agenda of the conference. That afternoon session on peace marks the high spot of friendship and emotional kinship in inter-American gatherings. Another one of the fine figures of the American continent was presiding, Dr. Miguel Cruchaga of Chile, one of the ten ministers of foreign affairs heading their delegations here—which fact alone made this conference stand out as unique. So far the peace commission had done little. Consciousness of the war going on between Bolivia and Paraguay settled like a dense fog over any enthusiasm for new peace machinery. And everyone knew that war in the Chaco might have been stopped if it had not been for the war between the peace pacts—the Kellogg Pact, the League of Nations, the Neutral Commission at Washington, the A. B. C. of South America, all of which had got in each other's way in trying to settle the Chaco question. The conference had before it the youngest of all such schemes, the Argentine Anti-War Pact. The whole peace machinery was so clogged and confused that there seemed no way out, especially if the pride of the United States in the Kellogg Pact and that of Argentina in her anti-war pact were to be saved, for neither one had signed the other's pact or seemed likely to do so. Then came the dramatic presentation of a joint resolution by Argentina and Chile that all the nations of America be appealed to to sign all five peace treaties: the Gondra Treaty on Conciliation, approved at the Fifth Pan-American Conference, providing for conciliation commissions at Washington and Montevideo, respectively, to investigate and report on disputes, but with no right to suggest settlement; the Washington (1929) Conciliation Treaty, which improved the Gondra agreement by providing for recommendations for settling disputes; the Washington Treaty on Arbitration of the same date, which provides for compulsory arbitration of juridical questions; the Kellogg Pact, which commits all signers to renounce war but provides no machinery for settling differences; and the Argentine Pact, recently signed in Rio by six Latin American countries, which provides for conciliation and for signatories to unite in economic and political pressure to compel violators of the pact to keep the peace.

The chairman read the list of countries which had and had not signed these various agreements, thus making clear the confusion in the whole matter and the rivalry between various countries like Argentina and the United States in their attitudes toward peace machinery based on political and economic nationalism. Only Mexico was able to report that she had signed every one of these pacts, as she was able to say she had no serious questions pending with other nations. Then one by one the penitents came to the altar, confessing their sins. The first was Argentina. She had not signed the Kellogg Pact, the Gondra Pact, or the two Washington treaties; she would sign them all! Brazil followed; she had signed all but the Kellogg Pact; she would sign that! Then rose the gray-haired gentleman from Tennessee. What would he say? Was it possible that he would accept the olive branch offered by Argentina? Yes, and much more, the United States would sign the Argentine Pact as it had already signed the other pacts—which was not accurate, as the President has refused to promulgate the Washington Arbitration Treaty after its mutilation by the Senate. Continuing, Secretary Hull made his remarkable address, the most far-reaching speech of any American since Root's famous words in Rio de Janeiro in 1906 and Wilson's in Mobile in 1913. The effect of this declaration was tremendous, especially of the following section, which was quoted often within and without the conference:

> May I for a moment direct attention to the significance of this broad policy as my country is steadily carrying it into effect under the Roosevelt Administration, the extent and nature of which should be familiar to each of the nations here represented? My government is doing its utmost, with due regard to commitments made in the past, to end with all possible speed engagements which have been set up by previous circumstances. There are some engagements which can be removed more speedily than others. In some instances disentanglement from obligations of another era can only be brought about through the exercise of some patience. The United States is determined that its new policy of the New Deal—of enlightened liberalism—shall have full effect and shall be recognized in its fullest import by its neighbors. The people of my country strongly feel that the *so-called right of conquest must forever be banished from this hemisphere and, most of all, they shun and reject that so-called right for themselves.* The New Deal indeed would be an empty boast if it did not mean that.

The adherents continued to announce themselves. Cuba, Haiti, and Santo Domingo threw spice into the gathering by reference to what they hoped the words of the Secretary of State would mean in relation to their respective countries. The conference might have adjourned then with a real accomplishment to its credit, since it had succeeded in getting Argentina and the United States, together with various other countries, to pledge themselves to observe all the peace provisions of the five pacts.

But this unity was to produce two other moving ses-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sions, one when the armistice in the Chaco war was signed, the other when intervention was discussed. The whole conference has been deeply affected by the struggle between Paraguay and Bolivia. Tremendous pressure was being put on these two governments to settle their difficulties. Fortunately the Commission of the League of Nations, with which the whole conference was determined to work in closest cooperation, was in the Chaco itself working for a settlement. At 1 a.m., December 19, the sirens of the Montevideo newspapers announced the news that an eighteen-day armistice had been signed.*

There followed that afternoon the session of Commission II on the Codification of International Law, when intervention was considered. The United States had secured the postponement of the meeting for several days to get more time to study the proposal of a subcommittee which brought forward eleven articles concerning the rights and duties of states, the main one of which was the declaration that "no state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another state." This was the one question on which the American continent was absolutely divided, with twenty nations standing on one side and one on the other. Not a Latin American nation failed to register itself as completely opposed to intervention. Even Argentina and Chile, which it was rumored might come to the rescue of the United States and ask for a postponement of the vote, were unable to make anything but categorical statements favoring the resolution.

What would Mr. Hull say? For by his attitude here would be judged all the fine promises he had been making. He was evidently confused by the debate, inadequately interpreted in whispers by a companion at his side. He read his prepared address and added slowly a few words of explanation, the substance of which was that the United States felt that more time would be needed to codify a law on intervention but that the United States voted for the resolution, with the interpretation given by the addresses of President Roosevelt and of himself on the Good Neighbor policy, and that he could absolutely assure every Latin American nation that they need fear no intervention in their countries during the Roosevelt Administration.

Pan-Americanism has been saved from the rocks on to which it was rapidly drifting. After the memorable session on intervention I talked with delegates from Cuba, Guatemala, Santo Domingo, Paraguay, Bolivia, and various other countries. All these confirmed my feeling concerning the positive accomplishments at Montevideo, which mark a real change of course in inter-American relations. The Cuban delegation was among the most enthusiastic. With Haiti and Nicaragua they have been the sharpest critics here of American policy. While they would have liked an unequivocal vote by the United States against intervention, they believe that a great step forward has been taken, that, in fact, the final blow has been given to a practice that has divided the American continent. The magnificent tribute of Dr. Puig of Mexico to President Roosevelt and Mr. Hull and his appeal to them to rise to a great generous new day was a ringing, honest tribute such as had never been heard before in a Pan-American conference. It was only one of the things that made this meeting unique.

A New Rebellion in China

By CRISPIAN CORCORAN

Tientsin, December 1

REGARDLESS of external aggression, natural disasters, and all the other woes which have beset her during the last two years, China cannot abandon her age-old pastime of civil war. Since the fateful day in September, 1931, when the world was startled by the Japanese occupation of Mukden, no fewer than four major conflicts have broken out in different parts of the country. This number does not include the perennial "anti-red" campaign which is constantly in progress to suppress what is essentially an agrarian revolt in the provinces of Kiangsi, Fukien, Hupeh, and Szechwan.

A fortnight or so ago were heard the first rumblings of a new revolt, this time in the maritime province of Fukien, which with Canton supplies 90 per cent of China's overseas emigrants. Several facts invest this new outbreak with great importance. In the first place, its military backbone is the Nineteenth Route Army, famous for its heroic defense of Shanghai. Secondly, the rebels immediately made common cause with the so-called "Communists" in Kiangsi. Thirdly, for the first time since the great anti-North expedition of 1926, a rebellion has taken place which has expressly repudiated the Kuomintang and its founder, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, instead of claiming, as others have claimed, to be the only "true" Kuomintang and to be waging war for the spirit of the founder's message. Finally, the new regime has fearlessly tackled the delicate problem of land reform in the landlord-ridden southern provinces. Instead of vague promises of future action, almost its first official act was to order the survey and reapportionment of the great estates on the principle of "the land to tillers of the land."

The new government was proclaimed on November 20 as a "Workers' and Peasants' Republic." On the same day it issued a proclamation, the main terms of which may be briefly stated as follows:

1. The power of government is taken away from the hopelessly compromised Kuomintang and handed back to a National Assembly of the people to be convened at the earliest possible date.

2. Full equality and freedom to all citizens and inhabitants of China irrespective of race, creed, or sex, with the exception of rebels and "oppressors of the workers and peasants" such as "militarists, mandarins, gentry, landlords, counter-revolutionaries, parasites, and riffraff," who will be "exterminated."

3. Emancipation of workers and peasants; repudiation of all unequal treaties; full enforcement of tariff autonomy.

* War in the Chaco was resumed on January 4, negotiations for peace having failed. Attempts to reach a settlement will continue, and Secretary Hull will discuss the question with other Latin American delegates on his way home.—EDITORS THE NATION.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

4. Nationalization of agriculture. An immediate measure toward this aim to be the granting of land only to those who can themselves till it. Forests, mines, waste lands, and so forth to be immediately taken over and managed by the state.

5. Industrial reconstruction. State management of the most important industries.

6. Firm establishment of the right to work, to personal freedom, to freedom of speech, to assembly and publication, as well as the right to strike.

7. Repudiation of the Kuomintang Government. Establishment of a People's Revolutionary Government which it will be the duty of all citizens to defend.

The personnel of the new government shows clearly that here is an attempt to reconstitute the old "united front" of Communists and Kuomintang (under a different name) which obtained until the historic break-up of the Nationalist movement in 1927. Li Chai-sum, head of the new administration, was one of the chief commanders of the Cantonese expedition. Chen Ming-shu, another veteran of the campaign and an old Kuomintang man, is the head of the Executive Committee (that is, virtually Premier); Eugene Chen, who has been Foreign Minister in Nanking, Hankow, and Canton, assumes the same position at Foochow. Tsai Ting-kai, once lauded as the "hero of Chapei" and today the target of Nanking's propaganda machine, will play the same role in the "Cabinet" as Chiang Kai-shek played in the first years of the Kuomintang advance. It is feared in some quarters that he will play it to the bitter end. Like Chiang Kai-shek he is ambitious.

The gulf between actions and words is in China, more than anywhere else, a yawning chasm. Before going into raptures over the Foochow program it is well to remember that Chen Ming-shu and Tsai Ting-kai, nobly announcing the impending "extermination" of militarists, themselves fall under that category. The same applies to Li Chai-sum, an opportunist, who has hitherto leaned rather to the right than to the left. Eugene Chen is not exactly a chameleon as is charged by Nanking. His career has been much more consistent and can stand far closer examination than those of his would-be detractors. Nevertheless, he has been in the wilderness a long time, and it is possible that he is willing to yield a little in principle for the satisfaction of being again "Foreign Minister."

Very indicative is the fact that Mme Sun Yat-sen, who at one time organized the "Third Party" reputed to be one of the factors in the movement, has said in effect that the new uprising is another case of disgruntled militarists and politicians tempting the people with slogans in order to climb over their backs. This report was issued by Nanking's Central News Agency, which is overloading the cable lines with denunciations of the rebels. Nevertheless, since Mme Sun has not taken the trouble to repudiate the message, it may be taken as an indication of her true feelings. Mme Sun is one of the brightest spots in the Chinese political and intellectual world. If she has not allied herself with the movement, it is because very valid reasons have prevented her from doing so. The factor of fear for personal safety may be ruled out. Mme Sun long ago showed that fear is not part of her make-up.

The international aspect of the revolt is important. The Fukien coast is directly opposite Formosa and is recognized as a special sphere of Japanese influence. No political change can be made within the province without a full consideration of the Japanese factor. Although the aims of the present rebellion are outwardly in every way inimical to the Japanese, it must be remembered that Japan has long managed her affairs in China on the principle of *divide et impera*, and helped any and every faction sow discord when it suited her purpose.

The Foochow regime, although it has tacitly let it be understood that one of the reasons for its dissatisfaction is Nanking's policy of pandering to Tokio, has made no pronouncement on the vital question of relations with the Island Empire. Of course this may be a purely tactical silence guided by the fear that the Japanese and Chiang Kai-shek's troops will unite to crush the present revolt as they united last spring to crush the "anti-Japanese National Salvation Army" of Feng Yu-hsiang and his allied generals in North China. Nevertheless, the position is not such as to prepossess Chinese public opinion in favor of the new government. I myself prefer to think that the movement is not inspired by the Japanese and that it is far less friendly to them than, for instance, Chiang Kai-shek, who has been doing their donkey work for them in north and south for more than two years.

There is so far no indication that the Fukien regime has found allies among other disaffected elements in China. The semi-independent reactionary government of Chen Chi-tang in Canton is an autonomous feudal administration owing allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek. Of late the influence of the politicians of the right wing, headed by the embittered Hu Han-min, has waned in the southern city and the military cabal seems to have decided on armed neutrality. The attitude of other southwestern militarists seems essentially the same, though their future movements are more difficult to predict.

Feng Yu-hsiang, former Christian general and a recent rebel against Nanking, is also sitting on the fence. The southern leaders gave him little but fine phrases when he needed their support last spring. Now, with more than one province under his control despite his recent "defeat," he is giving them some of their own medicine.

There is no doubt that the Fukien movement of revolt will have a beneficial effect. Whether it succeeds or not is immaterial. In a sense it may be said to provide a final test for the Kuomintang. The bankruptcy of the party's policy was made evident by the Japanese crisis. If this situation is not met its influence will be at an end. Nevertheless, it is obvious that China's salvation will come neither from Nanking nor from Foochow. It can come only when the bankruptcy of the present rulers, both in the Kuomintang and out of it, has manifested itself in every field and a new popular movement is born out of the general disintegration. This may find its genesis in the "Soviet" districts of Kiangsi or elsewhere. There are signs of it everywhere. China awaits a movement led neither by generals nor by silk-gowned politicians. The solution of her problems can only come after a new revolutionary era.

[*Recent dispatches indicate the imminent defeat of the Nineteenth Route Army by the Nanking forces. This probable shift does not, however, affect the validity of Mr. Corcoran's interpretation of the Fukien revolt and the present conflict of interests in China.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Washington Seesaw

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, January 13

"WHEN the Supreme Court displays some common sense, *that's news!*" Although this rule may not be attributed to a famous editor, it explains the extraordinary furor created by the decision in the Minnesota mortgage case—and the explanation is soundly grounded on experience and logic. The court has taught us to expect the worst, and the contrary occasions surprise. It so happens that in this particular instance I was not surprised. In the first place, I never believed the Constitution to be the stupid instrument expounded by Jim Beck and his kind. In the second place, it has been obvious, almost since last March, that the country is under what amounts to a dictatorship by common consent, and that interference would be brushed aside. That the dictator is a man who believes in democratic processes, is willing to take counsel, and is concerned with the plight of the common man is but another lucky break proving that God takes care of drunken men and the United States of America. As I asserted here a year ago, there are four old men on the court who would take particular delight in defying the popular will, knowing that the mob was at the door. The doubtful and deciding element consisted of Hughes and Roberts. Following the Senate debate over his confirmation, it was evident that the Chief Justice had dedicated the remainder of his life to proving that he was not a mere corporation lawyer. Roberts is conservative by nature, but he is young enough to see what is going on in the world, intelligent enough to understand it, and honest enough to discard his prejudices. In that lies the answer to the decision. The quintessence of the question was whether a nation of 125,000,000 people should immediately be plunged into economic and social chaos or the strict letter of a document composed by men who have been in their graves more than a century should be violated. The fact that the decision was close should provoke reflection on the future status of the court. It appears that some editors are striving to persuade themselves and the public that the decision carries no implications touching other recovery measures. I suggest they read the dissenting opinion.

* * * * *

WHILE the highest legal tribunal, by a majority of one, was demonstrating its right of survival, the highest industrial tribunal was adding to the evidence that it should either be drastically reorganized or completely abolished. Nothing in the progress of the recovery program has been more disappointing and demoralizing than the collapse of the National Labor Board. Set up as the supreme arbiter of disputes between labor and capital, it has degenerated into an object of employers' contempt and employees' despair. Buried under a growing mountain of complaints, it blusters and does virtually nothing. It was futile against Ford at Edgewater, and pathetic against National Steel at Weirton. It meets, only to adjourn for the ridiculous reason that the industrial members don't show up. Even Louis Kirstein, the most devoted of them, is missing. Its chairman, Senator Wagner, is away on Capitol Hill, leading the fight against ratification of the President's St. Lawrence Waterway Treaty. Its most diligent officer, Dr. William Leiserson, has resigned as secretary and gone over to the Petroleum Labor Board, apparently in search of action. As thousands of automobile workers are reported discharged for joining the union, General Johnson removes the limitation on working hours in that industry. The strange new friendship which has developed between Donald Richberg and the steel barons since he joined their code authority has aroused profound suspicion among labor men. Probably it is unwarranted. I have had a speaking acquaintance with the man for several years, and have always trusted him. But distrust exists, and it will be the seed of trouble, mostly courted by himself. Prices continue to rise much faster than wages, despite the now strenuous efforts of Mrs. Rumsey and Dexter Keezer, and more than six million men are still looking for work—even such work as lifting rocks from one pile and laying them on another for the CWA.

* * * * *

THIS ominous prospect is mainly responsible for Johnson's decision to move immediately for a national thirty-hour week in industry—and inspires one, incidentally, to wonder whether Senator Black's original thirty-hour bill should not have been incorporated in the Recovery Act. With approximately 85 per cent of industry operating under codes and more than six million unemployed, a further shortening of hours is plainly demanded; with prices soaring as they are it is equally plain that such reduction must be attended by no cut in wages. Johnson sees the problem clearly, and was characteristically frank in discussing it with me.

> Most of the codes in force [he said] call for forty hours. We have gone far enough to know that a forty-hour week won't do the job. I never did think it would, but it was necessary to convince some people by actual experience. In fact, even under normal prosperity, a forty-hour week would not result in the absorption of all the unemployed. The change must be made, and the sooner the better. I realize the difficulties from the employer's standpoint. Some of the codes in force have literally raised hell in some industries. Companies without cash reserves, or whose reserves are frozen in closed banks, and which are unable to borrow, will howl their heads off at the idea of cutting hours without cutting wages. But there's only one way out of this depression, and that's to put people to work at decent living wages. When industry goes as far as it can in that direction, it will be the government's duty to help it. We're all in this boat together, and we will all float or sink together.

As suggested by Johnson, the matter of financing increased industrial employment is crucial. Aside from the obvious fact that Wall Street is seeking to engineer a bankers' strike against the Administration, and partially succeeding, there is the genuine fear which prompts well-meaning banks to remain liquid. This fear arises from the fact that the public doesn't trust the banks. All of which serves to emphasize once more that the greatest blunder which Roosevelt ever

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

made was to turn the banks back to the bankers. It is my belief that he already realizes it, and it is my suspicion that before he gets through events will compel him to take them over again. The government is now prepared to take their gold; the next logical step would be the assumption of their commercial functions. Senator Cutting has endeavored to hasten the event by proposing the establishment of a central federal bank, with a government monopoly of credit. If recovery must wait until the public can learn to trust the bankers again, we might as well end everything now.

* * * * *

THE historic struggle to preserve the constitutional right of any American citizen to advertise and sell poisonous garbage in fancy packages to the sick and suffering as a cure for whatever ails them goes briskly on, and no recognized method of blackmail, coercion, or slander has been overlooked in the campaign to defeat the Tugwell bill and discredit its sponsors, although I believe the food, drug, and cosmetic manufacturers have not yet resorted to kidnapping. Among recent essays of that character was an attempt to get the job of Walter G. Campbell, Chief of the Food and Drug Administration, an official with a long record of devoted and honorable service to his country. The demand for his dismissal came from the ostensible head of a "patriotic" society, and was based on the claim that Campbell had violated the Act of 1919, prohibiting departmental officers from lobbying. Campbell had appeared before a Senate committee (at its request), explained the provisions of the measure, and urged its passage. Had he refused to appear he would have been punishable for contempt. Inquiry revealed that the individual demanding his head manufactures a "home remedy" for gallstones! The corporation which operates a national chain of gaudy fountains dispensing a well-known horse physic in the guise of a newly discovered "tonic" for human beings has heard the call, retained a prominent Democratic politician as counsel, and rallied to the fray. But hold! All is not so well. It was suggested here recently that some friend of the President might properly apprise him of the numbers in which his campaign supporters had rushed to Washington and were cashing in on their prestige. A friend lost no time. Within a week, by what I am assured was sheer coincidence, the Honorable J. Bruce Kremer, attorney for the Drug Institute, arch foe of the Tugwell bill, presented his resignation as Democratic national committeeman for Montana. Almost simultaneously, North Carolina's national committeeman, who had established headquarters here in behalf of the rayon and such other interests as might hire him, retired to private life. I make bold to say that similar resignations will shortly be forthcoming, either voluntarily or by request. Incidentally, Secretary Morgenthau the other day sent for Elmer Irey. It is Irey's duty to uncover income-tax frauds. Being probably the ablest investigator in the government service, he has uncovered plenty of them, but often in the past found himself powerless to do anything about it. Morgenthau told him that the lid was off, the bars were down, the sky was the limit, and no holds barred. Such things tend to prolong this old cynic's faith in the head of this Administration. For years I trembled to print in *The Nation* the name of any unemployed crook for fear I would wake next day and find him on the Federal Trade Commission.

In the Driftway

IN the midst of the alarms and financial excursions which have filled the newspapers since the President asked for a ten-billion-dollar budget, the mysterious monster that lives in Loch Ness in Scotland has persisted as an item of news. The creature has now been seen by several dozen persons, it has been photographed, shown in the newsreels, described variously by eyewitnesses, and learnedly discussed by experts, not the least of whom is the Right Reverend Sir David Oswald Hunter Blair, Bart., a monk of the Order of St. Benedict, who has been in turn Headmaster and Lord Abbot of the Monastery at Fort Augustus at one end of the famous loch. The Lord Abbot expresses his belief in the existence of the monster and confidently describes it as an amphibian belonging to a species that existed many million years ago. It is not clear whether or not his lordship saw the creature himself, but taking the word of a large number of persons who did, including a number of persons living by the shore of the lake, certain foresters, students and servants at the Fort Augustus Abbey School, and nine independent travelers, he declares that it has "both lungs and gills, four rudimentary lys or paddles, and is about thirty to thirty-five feet long, with a remarkable neck, long and flexible, broad shoulders, and a large, flat, broad tail which can churn the water of the loch" to a foam. As a final picturesque detail, the Lord Abbot adds that the distinguishing characteristic is its skull, which consists of one single bone.

* * * * *

THIS description is admirably detailed and enlightening. It would, indeed, be convincing if it were not that what other persons saw differed a little from the Lord Abbot's account. W. Urwick Goodbody, a member of the Ness District Fishing Board, reported, according to the New York *Times,* that he had seen "a creature with a long, thin neck, a small head, and eight humps." Arthur Grant, of Edinburgh, also reported a sight of the creature on January 5. Mr. Grant was pursuing his way along the shore of the lake on a motor cycle, the time being about 1:30 a. m. of a bright moonlight night. He reported what happened as follows:

> It was about thirty or forty yards from the Glasgow-Inverness road that I observed in the moonlight on the other side of the road from the loch what appeared to be a large black object. I was almost on it when a small head on a long neck turned in my direction, and the object, taking fright, made two great bounds, crossed the road, and plunged into the loch. . . . It had a long neck with eel-like head and large oval-shaped eyes just on top of its small head. The body was very hefty and I distinctly saw two front flippers. There were two other flippers which seemed to be webbed behind, and there was a tail . . . five or six feet long. The curious thing about the tail was it did not, as far as I could see, come to a point but was rounded off.

* * * * *

IT is plain from these presumably sober accounts from presumably sane persons that Something Large and Strange is floating about in or walking about on the edge of Loch Ness in northern Scotland. The motion pictures taken so far of the monster show merely a disturbance in the water at some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

distance from the camera. The accounts by eyewitnesses, as the foregoing extracts show, are very far from being in agreement, and one might add that Mr. Grant had very sharp eyes to see all he saw at night, even in bright moonlight. Nor is this to impugn the veracity of Mr. Grant or any of the other honest accounts of the Scottish monster. The Drifter would even wager that further eyewitnesses will describe the creature, and the more accounts of it there are, the closer they will agree. It is perhaps possible, but certainly not likely, that a large animal, fish or mammal, belonging to an otherwise vanished species, actually inhabits an inland lake twenty-three miles long and eight miles from a bay of the North Sea. It is more easily understandable that if even one person with telling earnestness reported that such a monster had been seen, other persons would, before long, believe just as earnestly that they saw it also. The Drifter does not, of course, like to express an attitude of too great skepticism in the matter, particularly since he has never been in that part of Scotland. Being in a mellow mood, he is willing to declare that if *The Nation* will pay his traveling expenses to Loch Ness, and if while he stands on its shores in broad daylight, he sees, first, a churning of the water, then a creature, with or without humps, swim to the shore and climb the bank at his feet, and if it is even six instead of sixteen feet long and looks like something other than a beaver—if all these conditions are fulfilled duly and in the presence of witnesses, then and then only will he believe—and will give himself up to the nearest alienist forthwith. There are some things which it is not good for man to see, and Sea Serpents are this sort of thing. But to talk about them—that is another matter!

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

An Answer to Mr. Rodman

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

There are several plain errors of fact in Selden Rodman's article Youth Meets in Washington in *The Nation* of January 17.

1. The National Student Federation of America was not the group which originally proposed a joint conference of student organizations. The original suggestion came from the Student League for Industrial Democracy, whose representatives took it up with leaders of the Y. M. C. A. and the N. S. F. The proposal was made in the middle of October, *not* last summer.

2. There never was any clear agreement in the Executive Committee that planned the National Conference of Students in Politics on whether or not resolutions were to be passed. Whenever the subject was mentioned, the representatives of the Student L. I. D. plainly said that if two or three planks—on the R. O. T. C., retrenchment in education, and other things—could get nearly unanimous acceptance, they should be introduced. Such, I am sure, was the understanding of the majority of members of the Executive Committee.

3. Mr. Rodman dismisses the conferences of the Student L. I. D. and of the National Student League with a scant paragraph, most of which is taken up with our demonstration outside the White House. But his description of the White House meeting also is incorrect. It was a protest against the continued appropriation of federal funds for the R. O. T. C., and all the placards were relevant to that particular protest.

4. No program was presented to the Executive Committee before the conference decided whether it should "have a program at all." And if no program had been presented, how could "the leaders of about half the organizations taking part in the conference [have] opposed the program," as Mr. Rodman claims?

5. As for the post-conference attitude of the Student L. I. D. toward the N. S. L., Mr. Rodman might have consulted the L. I. D. He would have learned that we are undertaking several joint activities this spring.

All these points are important, because through these errors of fact Rodman tries to discredit the only student organizations that have shown any aggressiveness and intelligence in building up a student movement, accusing them of bad faith, stupid tactics, and stereotyped thinking.

The Washington conferences were successful because they had color, dash, and militancy and the clash of cleanly opposed points of view. The proof is in the fact that the issues that were raised in Washington are now being debated in undergraduate newspapers and forums throughout the country. And if credit is due to anybody it should go to the Student League for Industrial Democracy, which first had the vision of all these student conferences being staged in one city, which faithfully cooperated in the dreary organizational details, which backed the only sort of program which could have been adopted without splitting the conference, a program which, nevertheless, was one taking a stand on the vital student issues. Credit for Washington should go to the two courageous student organizations that dared to picket and parade at the risk of offending the unemancipated and the prominent campus politicians, and that made the week in Washington the colorful, exciting, and significant event in student annals that it has become.

New York, January 11

JOSEPH P. LASH,
Secretary National Executive Committee,
Student L. I. D.
Member Executive Committee, National
Conference of Students in Politics

Is This Currency Inflation?

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

J. David Stern of the New York *Evening Post,* reproaching you for your regret at his "championship of currency inflation," writes you that he has "never championed currency inflation," and none of his papers ever has championed it.

Now Mr. Stern is highly educated, and he knows very well that we do nine-tenths of our business without the use of specie, by means of bank checks, drafts, and bills of exchange. This is sometimes called "deposit currency," sometimes "bank currency." Both terms are descriptive, for deposits are created mostly by loans, and this, the bulk of our currency, is a credit currency.

"We have fought for a program of credit expansion, not currency inflation," Mr. Stern avers. But credit expansion of the kind he describes results inevitably in bank-currency inflation. His Philadelphia *Record,* moreover, has denounced Wall Street time and again for the pre-depression inflation of credit which brought the boom and its disastrous consequences. He is now urging that the government practice, in a different field and under certain safeguards, the same sort of inflation; and it is useless to deny it.

Elsewhere I have spoken publicly in praise of Mr. Stern's courage, intelligence, and independence; it is thus the more disquieting to find him attempting, by hair-splitting and quibbling, to mislead the public.

Old Greenwich, Conn., December 29

SILAS BENT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

UNION
OF
Soviet
Socialist
Republics

7% GOLD BONDS

Interest Payable
Quarterly
at
The Chase
National Bank
of New York

3 Definite Advantages
are afforded investors who
purchase this Gold Bond

GOLD STABILITY

The bonds are issued in denominations of 100 gold roubles, at a price of par—100 gold roubles—and accrued interest. (A gold rouble contains 0.774234 grams of pure gold.) Principal and interest payments are based upon this fixed quantity of gold, payable in American currency at the prevailing rate of exchange. Obviously, this provision offers protection against loss resulting from possible further depreciation in the dollar.

SAFETY

Throughout the sixteen years of its existence the U. S. S. R. has unfailingly met all its financial obligations

MARKET

The State Bank of the U. S. S. R. will repurchase these bonds on demand of the holder at any time after one year from date of purchase, at par and accrued interest.

Circular N40 fully describing these bonds will be sent upon request.

SOVIET AMERICAN
SECURITIES CORP.
30 Broad Street New York

THE OPEN ROAD
IN
RUSSIA
EIGHTH SEASON

In pre-recognition days most American intellectuals who visited the U. S. S. R. went through the Open Road. They did so because this non-commercial organization with its independent representation in the Soviet Union enables the inquiring traveler to see most in the least time and at least cost.

More Americans of the professional classes look forward now to personal exploration of the Soviet world. The Open Road offers them the experience and connections of years of friendly cooperation with key individuals and institutions in the U. S. S. R.

Service to groups and those who travel on their own—Detailed advice on application to

THE OPEN ROAD, Inc.
56 West 45th Street New York
Cooperating with Intourist

Violent Dissent

To the Editors of The Nation:

James Farrell's review of Jack Conroy's "The Disinherited" in *The Nation* of December 20 struck me as being one of the most malicious bits of slander I have observed among the book reviewers. Practically all of Farrell's adjectives in the review are so false that perhaps he was reading some other book. To call Conroy careless is calumny; Conroy has a better ear than Ring Lardner; besides that, the parts that appeared in the *American Mercury* received the approval of the most careful man in the United States, H. L. Mencken. For Farrell to call this superb writing slapdash and mere reporting is an insult to an honest and experienced writer. To call it burlesque ought to call for a duel. To say that Conroy re-created almost nothing makes me dubious of Farrell's mentality, for in my opinion "The Disinherited" re-created the experience of *work*, a man on the job, physically and psychologically, particularly in those basic industries not generally used as subjects of literature, although they ought to be—steel mills, coal mines, auto factories, road building. And Conroy did this better than any other person ever did, including D. H. Lawrence on coal.

New York, December 23 Robert Whitcomb

Lese Majeste?

To the Editors of The Nation:

Today's issue of a local daily gives front-page prominence to the following A. P. dispatch:

> Accused of maligning President Roosevelt, Tom Smallwood, employed on a Civil Works project, was fined $10 by Police Judge Jim Givens, of Muskogee, Oklahoma. The Judge raised the fine from $5 to $10 because, as he said, the defendant bit the hand that was feeding him. Smallwood was allowed to return to work when he promised to be more patriotic in the future.

Although at first sight this incident does not seem of importance, I feel that the issue involved cannot be overstressed. It is unnecessary for me to point out the obvious future of such an ominous beginning.

Los Angeles, Cal., December 18 L. Osheroff

Contributors to This Issue

James Rorty will publish this spring a book on advertising entitled "Advertising—Not to Praise."

Carl Becker is professor of European history at Cornell University.

Samuel Guy Inman, an authority on Latin American affairs, was an unofficial observer at the recent Pan-American Conference at Montevideo.

Crispian Corcoran is the pseudonym of a newspaperman who has lived many years in China.

Paul Y. Anderson is a Washington correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

William Troy is a member of the English department of Washington Square College, New York University.

Lewis Galantière is the author of "France Is Full of Frenchmen."

Beryl Harold Levy is the author of "Reform Judaism in America."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books, Architecture, Drama

Sculptured

By CHARLOTTE WILDER

Goaded through a vein of rock,
The pinch of marble at her heel,
(Stone pares her temples and her thighs)
She cannot vent her blood on steel,

She may not slake her throat with sighs;
Trapped in motion, she molests
Solids, forcing to a rift
Only the semblance of her eyes.

Sean O'Faolain

A Nest of Simple Folk. By Sean O'Faolain. The Viking Press. $2.50.

SEAN O'FAOLAIN is not a new writer, although this is the impression that one might get from a reading of the many enraptured reviews with which his first novel has been greeted. Although he is still quite young Mr. O'Faolain has been writing, and writing extremely well, for at least six or seven years; his The Bomb-Shop, published in the *Dial* in 1927, remains, in the opinion of this reviewer, his best single piece of writing to date; and several of the stories in "Midsummer Night Madness," particularly Fugue and The Small Lady, surpass in intensity both of style and characterization anything that may be found in his new work. Nor is Mr. O'Faolain so isolated a figure in recent Irish writing as the almost certain popularity of this new book is likely to make him appear. He belongs, as a matter of fact, to that generation of Irish writers whose common conscience was forged, some fifteen or more years ago, out of the smithy of Stephen Dedalus's soul. Mr. O'Faolain could not write of Ireland as he does, could not make political passion a subject rather than a motive, if Joyce had not written his "Portrait." This is of particular relevance in any study of Mr. O'Faolain's style—a style which reflects a sensibility that has absorbed, with exquisite tact and certainty, all that is best in modern Irish writing. From Joyce this writer has learned much about the use of homely words and images for unsuspected values of imaginative association:

> **Leo stirred the splinter-end with his toe, and it leaped into flame and then died out. A fir tree grew in his mind,** tall and snow-clotted, waving in the flame. Then, sliver of a root, levered from its womb in the bog, **it fell like all its ancient branches into a little dust.**

He has learned also—what few of Joyce's imitators have ever learned—that in projecting a subjective state a feeling for the precise rhythms of the mind or consciousness is at least as important as the choice of words:

> **But he soon forgot him and all of them, his eyes big with Limerick and the evening that was coloring the tall red houses and the muddy streets wide as a sea.**

But neither his use of images nor his handling of rhythms allows us to class Mr. O'Faolain among the many crude imitators of the author of "Ulysses." What has been learned has been assimilated into a personality that is in most respects fundamentally different. It would be better to say that what Mr. O'Faolain, like so many of his contemporaries, owes to Joyce is an enrichment and reorientation of the sensibility which make it possible for him to treat familiar Irish materials with a new freshness and beauty. Of Joyce it may be said that he has changed the whole landscape of a country—no longer does Ireland even *look* the same as the Ireland of Tom Moore, Lever, and Boucicault. Of this new landscape Mr. O'Faolain is an accomplished painter—on the whole, the most accomplished of the several who have recently appeared. A proper comparison, therefore, would be between Mr. O'Faolain's novel and the earlier novels and stories of Liam O'Flaherty, who gives a more violent reading of the Irish temperament, since he is writing of Aran and the west rather than the "soft" south of Kerry and Cork. Or between Mr. O'Faolain and Peadar O'Donnell, whose tenderly etched studies of the poorest class of Irish peasantry have won him the disfavor of the church and the admiration of the extreme left in Irish politics. And it is impossible, in reading Mr. O'Faolain's evocation of Cork on a sunny morning, to forget the fine descriptions of that city in Frank O'Connor's "Saint and Mary Kate." This comparison alone, if properly undertaken, would reveal how much all these younger Irish writers share in common. If Mr. O'Faolain's novel seems like a miracle among recent works of fiction, then, it is a miracle that does not come as too great a surprise to those who have been following the current development of Irish letters.

"A Nest of Simple Folk" covers a longer span of time than any other Irish novelist, except Joyce in "Work in Progress," has so far essayed: the narrative begins in 1854, with the boy Leo O'Donnell standing before his aunts' house in Kerry, and ends with the same character fighting in Dublin in the rebellion of 1916. Between these two events is crowded enough material to make the substance of at least a half-dozen novels of the average sort. In form it represents a fusion of the biographical with the chronicle or "panel" type of novel: Leo Foxe-Donnell, the son of Judith Foxe and "Long John" O'Donnell, sums up in his psychology and in the contradictions of his career the old conflict between the Anglo-Irish gentry—Protestant in religion, English in manners and loyalties—and the native Catholic peasantry. Any discussion of the work as a whole, its form or its theme, gets down, therefore, to the question of how skilfully Mr. O'Faolain has rendered the fundamental ambiguities of his hero's character. Without going into this question in detail, one must point out that the transition from the sensitive romantic boy of Book I to the rollicking and incredibly callous landlord of Book II is much too abruptly indicated. The sympathetic treatment of the first part, written in a thoroughly poetic subjective style, prepares us for a very different sort of development. The trouble is that Mr. O'Faolain has fallen into that quite common error nowadays which consists in an author's confusing his own sensibility with that of his character; the boy of Book I could not grow up to be the man of Book II, for the boy of Book I is too much like Mr. O'Faolain himself, or like his own image of himself in childhood. In the final section Leo takes on a new and much more credible identity as an old man, surrounded by his wife, Julie Keene, whom he had seduced in the old days, his nephew, Johnny Hussey, who had got him sentenced to jail for ten years, and his son, Johno, in whom he finds a fellow-conspirator against the forces which have wrecked his life. It is impossible to enumerate all the brilliant character creations which Mr. O Faolain his fitted into his pattern, all the way from Judith Foxe, who betrays all the instincts of her class in a single dramatic scene, to young Denis Hussey, whose disgust with his father's treachery brings the book to its thematic conclusion. The pattern has been so richly filled in that there is little that bears even remotely on the theme which has been left out. If there is rather less political material than one might expect, it is because Mr. O'Faolain wishes to allow politics to enter no more than it actually does into the everyday lives of these simple folk. But

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by the same argument one is forced to object that he has allowed religion much too small a place in his scheme. It is true that the hero denounces the priests in several passages; but there is an eloquent suspension of any sort of attitude on the part of the author, who probably wishes to profit by the examples of other Irish writers in recent years. Despite this important blank-space, the novel is a truly comprehensive picture of the social, economic, and political forces in Irish life during the last century which were to lead to the fateful bonfire of 1916. But what is truly admirable in it, what gives it its special significance in this country at the present moment, is the manner in which these forces are represented, not explicitly like so many abstractions, but as actively operative in recognizable human experience. This is to say, finally, that Mr. O'Faolain is something rarer and more necessary to us at the moment than the critic, the social historian, the orator. He is, first and last, the artist.

WILLIAM TROY

Book of a Liberal

The Paris Front. An Unpublished Diary: 1914-1918. By Michel Corday. E. P. Dutton and Company. $5.

THIS is a melancholy book. Were it a work of art, it would affect us as does, say, the Blue Danube waltz, for book and author are the product of a civilization now dead, the manifestation of a view of the world beclouded and perhaps—as a party view—never again to be seen. Corday is a sort of 1880 liberal, a sober, decent humanitarian to whom the notion of unilateral war guilt was from the beginning preposterous; for whom war itself, and not the German's conduct of the war, was the atrocity; who records almost with satisfaction instances of German respect and French disrespect for property in the invaded French territory, examples of French Socialist pusillanimity and German Socialist courage in their respective parliaments. He was close to those in high places, and his shrewd, disheartening diaries display terrifyingly the degree to which personal foibles and jealousies and animosities defeat the national purpose, defeat even the narrower purposes of those in power. As an *homme de gauche* he is suspicious of Poincaré, he detests Clemenceau, he abhors the military caste (to his mind the product of Jesuit teaching, with the exception of Sarrail, the "republican general"). A bureaucrat, he remains behind the lines, in Paris most of the time, where he takes note of the myths and superstitions, the heedless gaiety and disgusting blood-lust of the civilian population. He repeats—perhaps he said it first—the often-cited half-truth that the nation is quicker to sacrifice its sons than its savings. He records that at any moment until the very end proponents of peace were looked upon as traitors. In short, his are the book and the offended spirit of any liberal in any country during the progress of a war; and for those with perspective sufficient to allow them to see the clear import of these monotonously fragmentary notes, the cumulative effect is severe. But what, in the end, does it prove except that liberalism is a passive will to live and let live? That in a world of base passions liberalism is inconceivable as a national expression and powerless as a party creed? That liberalism is a word which may be used only to define the temperament and bias of an individual, and cannot stand for the sum and substance of a doctrine or of a plan of action? And even so, M. Corday remains a party man and not a man *tout court*. He displays the shortcomings of the French liberal as well as his more attractive humanitarianism. For example, he cannot hear of a Catholic priest carrying water to the thirsty or binding up the limbs of the wounded without assuring himself that the priest is in the field of danger only for the outrageous purpose of forcing the sacrament upon some helpless and unwilling agnostic. For this humanitarian a priest of that particular church cannot act out of plain pity and love. To answer the question why this should be would demand a survey of the history of the Third Republic. Meanwhile, it should be observed that much of this book will be unintelligible to readers unfamiliar with French politics and personalities in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the war.

There are many reportings of the wit of Tristan Bernard and the irony of Anatole France—the first very stale and the second very elaborate at this remove in time from their uttering. Somewhat this is due to the anonymous translation, which is a piece of British hack work. The book is heartily puffed by H. G. Wells.

LEWIS GALANTIÈRE

White and Black

Roll, Jordan, Roll. Text by Julia Peterkin. Photographic Studies by Doris Ulmann. Robert O. Ballou. $3.50.

HAVING spent most of her life in South Carolina, Mrs. Peterkin is qualified to write about the Negroes there. There are a few plantations left in the Gullah districts—she lives on one of them—where substantially the same spiritual relationship between white men and Negroes exists as existed before the War of the Rebellion. Although the Negro is no longer a slave and may leave his master when he will, actually he and two or three generations of his ancestors have lived on this same land, have been "looked after" in more or less the same way by white master and mistress, and have kept the same mixture of black and white genteel tradition. Now that the white overseer with his whip and his heavy boot is eliminated, the relationship is often purely benevolent as well as patriarchal. The black servant, by his own lights, is uniformly loyal to his master; the white master would consider it a violation of the code of a gentleman to "let down" his black servant. Both, as Mrs. Peterkin points out, are gentlemen in their way and have the same contempt for white trash and field-working Yankees. Both venerate high breeding, one of the first canons of which is that no gentleman performs manual labor and no gentleman's gentleman permits him to do so.

It is only fair to say that there are other canons of good breeding, and these the black servants exemplify in their persons and in their behavior as much if not more than do the whites. Gentleness, kindness, patience, soft voices, rich laughter, slow gesture—how often they are seen and heard among these Negroes Mrs. Peterkin makes clear. They have a confidence in themselves and in the continuity of their lives which no other racial group in America possesses to the same degree. These children of the forest, snatched untimely from their ancient way of life and subjected to a system of manners and discipline utterly strange to them, have not only, with a kind of somber triumph, adapted the white man's life perfectly to their own, but have actually molded it so that the tradition which is so significant and inescapable a part of the South is as much black as white.

The result Mrs. Peterkin describes with sympathy, humor, and impressive erudition. She knows how the Negroes speak and look and act, what they believe, how their songs grew, what it must mean to be a Negro child, and the importance of their religious beliefs. Exposed to Christianity, they found in it the equality and the freedom denied them in life, and they embraced these new myths with deep and passionate ardor. Mrs. Peterkin's last chapter is a moving account of how Christmas is celebrated, of the preparations which begin as soon as Thanksgiving is over, the scrubbing and mending and cleaning to make the house neat, the food that is prepared, the holly trees that are placed in the yard, the sweet cakes and candies, the songs

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

practiced on meeting nights. Finally on Christmas Eve the celebration begins with the children's performance at the "school breaking." Songs are followed by sugar cane to suck. Then to children and grown-ups alike the preacher tells the Christmas story. As the evening wears on, Watch Night services are held, and singing, prayers, and speeches last until the Christmas sun rises in the East.

> Then everybody comes out of doors to watch its glad mounting, for even the sun shouts on Christmas morning. The whole world rejoices when Christians and sinners clasp hands and march round and round giving everybody a glad Christmas handshake. Voices grown husky with singing all night become clear and strong as they lift the last song up to heaven: "Jesus is born in Bethlehem! Peace on earth, good-will toward men!"

It is idle to ask, as many intransigent non-believers will ask, what is the utilitarian value of such a simple Christian faith? Does it keep the Negro from suffering cold or hunger or from being lynched? Certainly not. Neither does it advance the revolution one hour. But that it has a value I do not doubt. A look at the faces in Mrs. Ulmann's photographs shows it clearly—when the face can be seen at all. For many of the pictures are so soft and vague as to be mere black blobs. It is a pity that the printing could not have been better or the photography sharper. But text and pictures together make a valuable record of an important contribution to American culture.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

Honesty and Fiction

Passions Spin the Plot. By Vardis Fisher. Doubleday, Doran and Company and the Caxton Printers. $2.50.

THIS second novel in Mr. Fisher's tetralogy, which began with "In Tragic Life," continues the story of Vridar Hunter through his college years. Both books are rather like case histories, both seem to be rather thinly disguised autobiography, and as autobiography they are very interesting and quite powerful. Mr. Fisher tells us that his purpose above all others is to write an "honest" book, and this he has done. His ability to describe a strange and primitive country like the Antelope Hill territory, and to interpret the effect of such a background on his characters, is unusual. But honesty in fiction and honesty in biography may be two different things. Honesty in fiction implies selection in order to achieve structure. To describe every experience in a young man's life and its effect upon his character, to document with letters and with diaries the inner struggle of youth, is not necessarily to write a novel. "Passions Spin the Plot" loses dramatic power because of its detailed, episodic form. Written as fiction but giving the impression of autobiography, it falls between the two forms.

Mr. Fisher is acutely aware of the complexities in his chief character. He traces the development of Vridar with great care. We see this very egocentric, extremely sensitive boy suffering as only such a boy would suffer when thrown into a new and somewhat alien environment. The first of his clan to go away to college, Vridar tries to learn what college and what college youths are about. Both his professors and his classmates disillusion him. But nevertheless he remains the stubborn individualist, intent almost exclusively upon his own inner feelings. He is in love with the little playmate of his childhood days, and as the book closes he marries her. One can see that the marriage will bring further tragedy to him, and to her a life she cannot understand.

If the other books in this series follow the same plan, the tetralogy will form a most interesting psychological document. Mr. Fisher's style is without affectation and is a good medium for his analysis of a single life. The other characters in these books are of minor importance. The whole is Vridar's story. But Mr. Fisher can draw character, can give with complete realism the picture of a curious and rather cruel clan society. There is passion behind his writing—and bitterness. Mr. Fisher is able, moreover, to make clear the various forces playing upon his central character and to persuade his readers of their part in forming that character.

EDA LOU WALTON

Franklin and His Grandson

The Two Franklins: Fathers of American Democracy. By Bernard Fay. Little, Brown and Company. $3.50.

Imaginary Conversations with Franklin. By William Cabell Bruce. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.

PROFESSOR FAY has made a lively story out of the relations between Benjamin Franklin and his grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache, and out of Bache's part in the "second American Revolution," as he calls it, which gave form to Jeffersonian democracy, although the claim of political fatherhood which he puts forward is at least open to debate. "Benny," as Bache is called throughout, was born in Philadelphia in 1769. In 1777, when Franklin went to France to negotiate a treaty of alliance on behalf of the new United States, he took Benny with him, but the lad fell in too readily with French ways, and Franklin, who intended him, as he said, "for a Presbyterian as well as a Republican," sent him to school at Geneva. Back in Philadelphia in 1785, Bache went to the University of Pennsylvania and fell desperately in love, while Franklin, after serving as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, presented Bache with a type foundry and printing establishment, and launched with him an ambitious but unsuccessful venture in publishing children's books, a Latin grammar, and some classical texts.

Bache stuck to printing for the rest of his short life (he died in the yellow-fever epidemic of 1798), but his contribution to American history was that of a partisan journalist. The field was not easily entered. Jefferson's star was rising, but the Federalists were in power with Fenno's *Gazette* as their organ, and Jefferson, after suggesting that Bache publish "a weekly edition without any padding or advertisements, so that it might be a paper of general distribution through the States and address itself to philosophical minds everywhere," gave the poet Freneau a job in the Department of State and helped him start the *National Gazette.* Late in 1790, however, Bache began issuing the *General Advertiser,* according to Professor Fay "an intelligent, philosophical, and erudite paper well fitted for the intellectuals of Pennsylvania," but one which nevertheless mixed news, moral advice, and advertisements "in picturesque and disconcerting disorder."

With the arrival of the French minister Genet, of whose personality and spectacular doings Professor Fay gives an inimitable account, the *General Advertiser* became his organ. In 1794, with Genet discredited and Freneau no longer to be reckoned with, the paper was rechristened the *Aurora,* and Bache the political journalist arrived. He achieved a "scoop" by obtaining and publishing a copy of the Jay treaty, attacked Washington without restraint, and made his paper a power in the bitter fight out of which John Adams emerged as President. In 1798 he raised a storm by publishing, probably with Jefferson's connivance, a long communication from Talleyrand, "not any too good or any too clear," which showed that France did not want war. His violent attacks had something to do with provoking the Sedition Act of 1798, but when summoned before a court to answer to the charge of libeling the President he defended himself, was released on bail, and went on with his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paper. The last issue of the *Aurora* before his death carried a charge of falsehood against Adams.

Professor Fay has had access to the Bache papers and has made industrious use of the newspapers of the time. His description of Franklin's last years in Philadelphia is delightful, and the whole volume is sprinkled with attractive sketches and entertaining anecdotes. One does not often find the results of scholarship presented in such an enjoyable form.

The nine scenes of Mr. Bruce's "Imaginary Conversations," each introduced by a prolocutor who speaks in verse, deal with episodes in Franklin's life in France, England, and Philadelphia and with the signing of the Constitution in 1787. The talk, with some exceptions, is too formal to be lifelike, but it is not without interest as an expression of Franklin's ideas.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

Justice Brandeis

Brandeis: Lawyer and Judge in the Modern State. By Alpheus Thomas Mason. Princeton University Press. $2.

WITH the constitutionality of the recovery program recurrently to be tested, and Mr. Justice Brandeis, though beyond the age of retirement, still staunchest of the liberals on the Supreme Court, this presentation of his views is especially welcome and timely. The texts of recent Brandeis decisions are among our most illuminating commentaries on current difficulties, filled, in the tradition of the "Brandeis brief," with economic materials persuasive in determining the course of law. None seems to have been more influential in emancipating the law from narrow professionalism, its bondage to *stare decisis*. "The logic of words should yield to the logic of realities."

Brandeis is a liberal in a sense in which Holmes is not; Brandeis is more *The Nation* liberal. Where Holmes would favor a State legislative enactment involving social experiment only because of his conviction that such matters are properly within the province of the legislature, Brandeis is positively concerned for the extension of social goods. Liberty through law is a central precept in his philosophy, and he stresses one as much as the other. This accounts for his zeal in furthering the rights of labor (as in opposing yellow-dog contracts) and those of the average business man (as in favoring a heavier license fee for chain stores), at the same time that he angers labor leaders by refusing to condone shady union methods. His insistence on human rights as against property rights distinguished his activities as a lawyer, and his judicial philosophy of democratic individualism proceeds from a solicitude for that self-fulfilment of every individual which he holds to as the American ideal. "Always and everywhere, the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of those concerned will remain an essential and the main factor in real betterment." It is this sensitivity which seems salient to the preeminence of a lawyer whose special competence is economics, especially statistical and accounting. Where others have also focused on limiting private-property rights, he has uniquely sought to enhance liberty by extending privacy to the realm of personal relations. Government intervention may and should insure greater equality of opportunity in competition, but it must not encroach upon the "right to be let alone—the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized man." His article on The Right to Privacy, written in collaboration forty years ago, actually created a new dimension in the law of torts. So strenuous is his central idealism that he will at times, however, seek to advance against a man's will his own presumed best interests. This may serve to explain his stand in favor of severe prohibition-enforcement measures, so puzzling to the author, as well as his unexpected assumption of Zionist leadership before mounting the bench, of which no mention is made here.

Whether the Wilsonian New Freedom, which he has essentially advocated (the same which Horace Kallen, with due indebtedness, has urgently restated in "Individualism: An American Way of Life") has not run its day instead of being the underlying philosophy of the Roosevelt program, as Mr. Mason contends in his only original thesis, may be seriously considered in the light of most recent developments. For a crucial instance it might be remembered that Brandeis, the "people's attorney," early conceived an inveterate distrust of large corporations as incapable of efficient administration and dehumanizing in their absentee control. (*Vide* as exhibits of prophecy Insull, Wiggin, the Van Sweringens, *et al.*) Hence he has been peculiarly anxious for the protection of the small entrepreneur, who, it seems clear, is suffering the gravest difficulties in meeting the demands of the Blue Eagle.

The book, by an assistant professor of politics at Princeton, has an even academic adequacy adapted to the interests of the general reader.

BERYL HAROLD LEVY

Shorter Notices

Upsurge. By Robert Gessner. Farrar and Rinehart. $1.

Whatever else this book may be, it is not a poem or a series of poems. It is a statement, but it is not a program. Mr. Gessner begins and ends his "poem" with the American "depression bastards." Meantime he reviews the desperate condition of youth in England, Germany, France. He attacks the society which makes of itself and for its youth a hell. All this is done in a kind of free verse or oratorical prose. The "oratory" is rather of the soapbox variety. But Mr. Gessner has not the language of a street speaker. He does not know the slang. He obviously means to identify himself with the people whose outcry he voices, but he does not know their language. The intention of "Upsurge" is obvious. Certainly the author wishes to move to action. The only question is whether such very obvious propaganda in verse moves to anything at all except astonishment. Today good soapbox speaking is needed, and is entirely purposeful. But "Upsurge" is a hybrid both in form and in subject matter.

The Aesthetics of William Hazlitt. By Elisabeth Schneider. University of Pennsylvania Press. $2.

The present century has seen a broadening and deepening of interest in the character and writings of William Hazlitt, a new interest evinced not only by the market for an edition of his works (still in course of publication) that is "complete" and by a judicious and successful biography but also by numerous critical studies and at least three volumes of selected essays. In general, however, the old view, represented by Saintsbury, has held the field, that Hazlitt's general pronouncements upon literature and the fine arts are less valuable and less stimulating than his particular criticisms of individual authors and their works. There was room for a critical study which should set these two departments of his writings in their right relation one to another and give a fairer evaluation of his philosophic and aesthetic theories. This need has now been very competently filled by Elisabeth Schneider in her monograph, which is described in its subtitle as "A Study of the Philosophic Basis of His Criticism." Miss Schneider's little book is itself so thoroughly condensed that it is not possible to offer a review of it in the form of a more succinct summary. It must suffice therefore to say that she examines Hazlitt's theoretical generalizations in the light of eighteenth-century critical theory, of the likenesses and contrasts between his views and those of Coleridge, of his partial understanding—an understanding that came to him not only at second

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hand but somewhat perverted by interpreters of Platonic leanings—of the critical philosophy of Kant, and of his other miscellaneous reading in English and foreign literature. She demonstrates forcefully that his indebtedness to Coleridge has been generally much overestimated. She shows also that the charge of "ignorance" which has traditionally been brought against him (notably by Saintsbury) is grossly exaggerated, though for this Hazlitt was himself somewhat to blame because of the candor of some of his own admissions of lack of knowledge. His philosophic pluralism is related to the catholicity of his tastes The degree to which, and the points at which, he anticipates subsequent developments of aesthetic theory are clearly indicated. A carefully compiled list, based on all available evidence, of Hazlitt's reading in the fields of philosophy, aesthetics, and criticism is of much value. An index would have enhanced the usefulness of a monograph which is excellent of its austere kind.

The New Party Politics. By A. N. Holcombe. W. W. Norton and Company. $1.75.

Professor Holcombe, one of the foremost students of American politics, presents here a concise analysis of the present trend of party politics in the United States. With the relative decline of agriculture and rise of industry, he reports, agrarianism is passing and urban politics is taking its place. Henceforth parties or factions will be based not on sectional interests but on class divisions. Therefore it is essential that we understand something of the way in which classes are likely to divide for the purpose of expressing themselves at the polls. Discussing the prospects of a proletarian dictatorship, Professor Holcombe frankly admits that "the American proletariat, as estimated by Bukharin's method, comprises a clear majority of the American people." Yet he feels that, given competent leadership, the broad middle class best represents the true interests of the country. A middle-class government might not be the most perfect conceivable, but in Professor Holcombe's judgment, as in Aristotle's, it would be "the safest." He examines the function of the middle class and offers suggestions for a program whereby it might take over and hold political power. He does not make the mistake of confusing the economic interests of the middle class with the program of the fascists, for he sees clearly that fascism is an upper-class device for perpetuating its own control of the state. If this book has no other value, it is certainly to be commended for attempting to show the petty bourgeoisie that if they are to be saved at all, it will only be by their own efforts and not by following blindly a demagogic Hitler or a blustering Mussolini.

The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. By E. E. Phare. The Macmillan Company. $2.75.

Anyone interested in Hopkins's poetry will wish to read this brilliant analysis of his poetic imagery. Miss Phare draws comparisons between Hopkins's poetry and Crashaw's, shows how Hopkins may be said to have learned from Wordsworth, relates, in other words, the most original poet of the nineteenth century to other poets whom he may have read. She is forced, however, chiefly to interpret his work as that of a poet's in isolation. So little is really known of Hopkins's life that any critic must turn to the texts of his poems in order to understand him. No one else has made so complete or so sensitive an analysis of these texts as has Miss Phare. Her account of Hopkins's imagery, language, syntax is most convincing. She proves Hopkins to be that rare type of poet who uses every awareness he has in his art. She shows that he never denied his complete sensuousness, that he disciplined this until it became part of his religious vision. Miss Phare employs admirably the method of interpreting the poetic process through its actual objective product. Imagery will, if carefully and correctly analyzed, indicate both a poet's methods and his philosophy.

George Eliot. By Ann Fremantle. Great Lives Series. The Macmillan Company. 75 cents.

In the effort to avoid eulogy Miss Fremantle tends to disparage unduly the breadth and individuality of George Eliot's mind and the power and originality of her writing. It was her intelligence and tenacity and honesty that enabled her to overcome the personal handicap of her uncomeliness and the obstacles that Victorian society put in the path of an ambitious woman. Her insistence upon being called Mrs. Lewes, though she made no effort to hide the nature of her union with George Lewes (who had a legal wife living at the time), may seem pretentious to us today, but it is just such brave and self-sacrificing challenges that have made modern social freedom possible. But for her grudging attitude Miss Fremantle's brief biography is readable and illuminating.

Architecture

1933: Looking Forward at Chicago

ARCHITECTURALLY, 1933 was the year of the Chicago Fair; not much else. And a turning-point was marked just because the turn had already been made. Not that "modern" was born at Chicago, any more than "classic" was born there at the Columbian Exposition in 1893, but that "modern" has now gained its popular acceptance. An entire previous generation was concerned with "reproductions." Now "modern" goes alongside, and tomorrow it will forge ahead. Twenty-two million tickets were issued to its first large demonstration at Chicago; moreover this was "not a motion picture," and the people liked it.

Some such consolation is needed by the exacting observer for his own hope deferred. The fair was a poor eye-rack. It was jazz. This aspect of it has already been commented upon. The forms were chaos, and the color was camouflage. True to jazz, the fair was best at night. Darkness dissolved the jarring zigzag silhouettes, while floodlights and neon tubes aerialized the colors. The forecast was fulfilled that was made in *The Nation* of January 14, 1931, under the title The Bright Lights. The fair was a sweet and crooning architectural blues.

Now jazz is a substitute. If it knew how, it would be something better than jazz. So our interest lies less in the achievement than in the aim. However limited their imagination, these architects meant to accept their times. They were consciously looking forward, as against the men of 1893, whose organization was better but who looked back. So it came about that the Century of Progress opened its doors, by however small a crack, to the forty years that have elapsed since the show of their predecessors closed down. These forty years were eventful, particularly in science, to which the fair was appropriately dedicated. We may see their effect, giving meaning even to the absurdities of the fair. Thus the color, for example, would never have been so bright had there not been a new attitude toward the buildings. They could be bright because they were built for only a day. This was correct, however bad the execution. If I build a house for "posterity," then it shall be stone gray, with everything done to hurry up the moss, or it shall be washed down a neutral white. But my clothes, designed for only a year, may have more color; and a masquerade costume for a single night—. The fair accepted the fact that it was ephemeral. This was a signal event. You can find no textbook of the nineteenth century that considers architecture, even in plaster, as anything else than just short of eternal. But we are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now to build lighter, cheaper, sufficient for the day. Our houses are not to stand in the way of our children, or even of ourselves later when the community needs the land or when we want—and could have—something better for that time. There must be no temptation later on to convert plaster into stone, as was done with the Fine Arts Building of 1893, and to foist it as a "beautiful thing" on a museum director for his use at just the moment when it is most hopelessly out of date, fit not for a museum but only for a museum piece. The butterfly is every bit as beautiful as the rock, and is a better butterfly.

Being frankly temporary, the fair structures were necessarily light. To eclectic architects like those in charge of the fair, the idea of lightness, to be sure, comes hard. These people were raised on "monuments." At the fair, for example, there was one big curiosity, the Chrysler Building. At first glance it was a Greek-cross arrangement of very handsome rectangular solid slabs—the architecture, as you understand, of "monumental mass." This mass was most carefully modeled, sliced thin, and painted classical white. And then, when you approached nearer, you saw that it was not the building at all. The real building was peeping out from between the pylon's knees. And this real building, neat and clean, had a circumference that was all plate glass!

Being ephemeral and lightly built, the fair could be planned as a part of a continuous process, not as a "finished" thing. I mean that the planning itself made provision for a next succeeding phase. The materials were such that they could be salvaged when the community needed the land again for other purposes and the buildings were torn down. The idea may not sound like much, but think what it might have meant to us today! Chicago and New York, planned for eternity, are both obsolete. What would one not give to be able to move whole sections of them bodily away! Frozen music, frozen assets, frozen life. Architecture has been the favorite art of those who made men slaves. Mobility and impermanence are its emancipation.

Few noticed that a related fluidity was working its way into the very layout of the fair. Superficially the long roads and ramps about which the fair was grouped had about as orderly an arrangement as the firehose at a fire. Yet at least they were not square or otherwise geometrical courts. The Columbian Exposition was. It had a "Court of Honor." Now the peculiarity of any such court is that it is self-contained, and your movements are determined by the space. You change your position from point to point, and you admire the vistas that turn on axis after axis. Entrances and exits are a mere accessory or even a nuisance, mere gaps in an otherwise perfect enclosure or mere holes in a wall. But today it is the movement, the traffic, the transportation, that is determining. The arrangement of the space itself is determined by your movements. And this was rudimentarily present in the long roads and crossed ramps of the fair, which were literally streamlined to the crowds. They conformed to the flow. It was a difference analogous to the difference between Aristotelean physics and Newtonian. In the one, objects are at rest unless interfered with. In the other, being at rest is only a particular state in a general condition of motion. It is a widening and slowing of the river, a pause in the symphony, an open terrace along the road. The modern man is less a Ulysses who returns from his journeys to a bedpost rooted in the ground than an Arab pitching his tent, at home wherever he stops along the way. At the fair, to be sure, the execution was confused and halting. No ruling categories can be clearly grasped by an eclectic.

Still, the effect of flow in the layout was reinforced by its presence in some of the buildings. Only the General Exhibitions Building was at all articulate, guiding you over a sort of crankshaft path, which included vertical slopes as well as horizontal turns. But the intention was there; the idea was announced. It needs now only a first-class imagination.

And here we might leave the fair. As an accomplishment, not much. A pain in color over a medley of chizzle-chuzzle forms. A masquerade of jazzed palaces and pylons. And yet, as against the fair of 1893, a better promise for the succeeding decades. As against axes, courts, and vistas, an evolving incipient roadtown. Wasteful mass yields to economical lightness; sluggish permanence to mobility and improvement. These are not all the architectural virtues, and indeed they entail the sacrifice of other contrary ones; but they furnish a unique opportunity of our own.

In one respect the architects badly erred. Their own movements lacked economy. They need not have had for their central feature a tower by a Frenchman in the manner of a Dutchman after American ideas exported circa 1903. Frank Lloyd Wright is doing better work today, and different. Those ideas of mobility, lightness, gaiety, growth, for which our fair architects were only reaching and striving, have by him long been thought upon and worked with, and achieved. The politics of the architects kept him out. I suppose, though, that Paul Whiteman might actually think himself the superior of Toscanini, and not every Michelangelo can appeal to a pope.

DOUGLAS HASKELL

Drama

"The Sickness of Today"

EVERY critic of Eugene O'Neill has of necessity pointed out that his plays are full of violent deeds and blasphemous opinions. For some reason, however, it has been less often remarked that they are also heavy with a sense of sin and that it is, after all, less the violence itself than this attitude toward it which is responsible for the peculiar flavor of his work. No one has been more thoroughly uncomfortable in our famous Waste Land or has taken less pleasure in boasting a membership in the legion of the damned. Quite plainly he is, by temperament at least, a man of faith, and the driving force behind his plays has always been a will to believe. Sometimes it has broken out into a half-articulate affirmation; sometimes it has been almost completely engulfed in doubt. But behind every fable has been implicit a search for what the author, speaking in his own person, has called some substitute "for the surviving primitive religious instinct," some cure "for the sickness of today."

Now official religion has always maintained that no such "substitute" can exist. Theoretically at least it merely waits for the sinner to discover the fact for himself and to return at last to that God whom he cannot, finally, do without. It is also accustomed to point with pride to those cases where the method has worked, and Mr. O'Neill can hardly be surprised if it claims him now. Quite possibly he will protest that "Days Without End" (Henry Miller Theater) is a play, not a confession; that his story of a rebel who returns to the bosom of the church says no more than that some men can thus cut the knot which he is still struggling to untie. Yet the fact remains that there is obviously much of himself in the hero, and that the whole process of surrender is described with sympathetic understanding. He was born a Roman Catholic, and his church has every reason to believe that he is closer to it now than he has ever been since the time when, like his new hero, he broke away.

As for the play as a play, it is only very partially successful. One must assume, I think, that it was deeply felt, but the deepest feelings do not, unfortunately, always receive the most adequate expression, and the fable suffers from the fact that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it can hardly mean much to those who are not themselves half prepared to join the hero in his leap. No one can doubt that such conversions do take place, that the difficulties which had previously seemed insuperable do sometimes simply fade away. But conversion is also a subjective phenomenon—something hard for a spectator to follow for the simple reason that he cannot, as an outsider, very well understand why the objections which seemed so valid before have become irrelevant now. The gesture is merely a gesture, and for the uninitiated the story remains only a pious tale too familiar to take on the new significance which, for the author, it must have acquired.

John Loving had lost his faith because his prayers did not save the lives of his parents. He had passed through various cynicisms and various social faiths until he found peace at last in his love for his pure and beautiful wife. His evil nature had not, however, really died, and almost against his will he becomes guilty of a casual infidelity with a woman whom he despises. Conscience will not let him rest; he makes a veiled confession, and when he realizes that his sin is about to deprive him of the woman he loves he is brought once more face to face with the emptiness of a world where there is nothing in which he can believe. Now in his darkest hour he throws himself at the foot of a cross; the wife returns from the threshold of death and—that is all. One difficulty is that Mr. O'Neill has not solved the notoriously hard problem of making virtue attractive, and that the pure woman appears only as a dull perfection. Another and more serious one is that the fable seems hardly relevant to any discussion of that "sickness of today" which always before has concerned him so deeply. We may grant that this sickness involves a loss of faith and a sense of sin; but the faith we lack is something much more inclusive than the kind of faith we lose when our prayers are not answered, and a casual adultery will hardly stand for the most characteristic of our sins. It would seem, in other words, that the symbols which Mr. O'Neill has chosen are hardly suitable to his theme unless, indeed, he does not mean them as symbols at all and is talking quite simply of sin as the theologian defines it and of faith as it is understood by the priest. The sickness which is here finally cured is much simpler than the one he has so often diagnosed. This is not a substitute for "the primitive religious impulse," but merely an illustration of how that primitive impulse itself can work. Hence if the play does not mean that he is at least contemplating surrender to an old faith rather than to a new one, it is difficult to see how it can mean anything at all.

The Theater Guild has produced the play with its usual loving care, and Earle Larrimore—who gives perhaps the best performance of his career—is admirable as the hero. It must also be confessed that after a pedestrian and very unpromising first act "Days Without End" again demonstrates the extraordinary ingenuity with which its author can turn the most unpromising material into good theater. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is one of the least successful of Mr. O'Neill's mature productions. If it indicates a change in his whole attitude, then it may be remembered as announcing a series of definitely and perhaps more satisfactory Christian plays. If, on the other hand, it is to be understood as continuing with new symbols his characteristic theme, it must be described as merely a minor work.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Those who took the "Ziegfeld Follies" with great seriousness will doubtless complain that the new series begun by Billie Burke at the Winter Garden resembles the original "Follies" only in name. Nevertheless the new production is a good show in its own right and it gives Fannie Brice an opportunity to be funny in a very unrefined manner.

P. M.

2nd Printing!

SEX HABITS

A VITAL FACTOR IN WELL-BEING

By A. Buschke, M.D. and F. Jacobsohn, M.D.

Specializing Physicians to the Great Continental Rudolf-Virchow Hospital

Foreword by Gerard L. Moench, M.D.

Associate Professor of Gynecology, New York Post-graduate Hospital, Columbia University

SUBJECTS EMBRACED

THE SEX ORGANS (Male, Female)
SEX INTERCOURSE (Analysis, Nature, Methods, Frequency)
SEX DIFFICULTIES (Adjustment, Technique)
MARRIAGE (Sex Aspects, Instruction)
VALUE OF REGULAR SEX INTERCOURSE
SEX HYGIENE (Precautions, Directions)
THE SEX IMPULSE (Contrasted: In Men, In Women)
SEX VARIATION (Physical, Psychological)
VARYING SEX PRACTICES
SEXUAL SHORTCOMINGS (Impotence, Frigidity, Sterility, etc.)
SEX DANGERS (Coitus Interruptus, reservatus; etc.)
SEX ABNORMALITIES (Perversion, Sadism, Masochism, Fetishism, Exhibitionism, Homosexuality, Hermaphrodism, etc.)
REPRODUCTION, FERTILIZATION, HEREDITY, EUGENICS

THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS

THE SEX ORGANS OF MEN (4 plates,* 15 illustrations)
THE SEX ORGANS OF WOMEN (3 plates,* 6 illustrations)
THE PROCESS OF REPRODUCTION (1 plate,* 3 illustrations)
FERTILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT (1 plate,* 2 illustrations)
DEVELOPMENT BEFORE BIRTH (2 plates,* 4 illustrations)

* Full-page.

"I believe it is not exaggerating to say that disturbances of the sexual apparatus cause more mental anguish and emotional upsets, aside from physical suffering, than any other lesions."

—Gerard L. Moench, M.D.

Eleven full pages of photographs.

PRESS COMMENTS*

". . . the sanest and most practical views of sexology and sexual hygiene that can be found. A clear conception of the male and female reproductive organs can be obtained. The description is accompanied by a set of beautiful photographs of the various organs. A finer set could not be found in any anatomy book. . . ."
—Glasgow University Publication

". . . gives those facts essential to a correct understanding of sex . . . a very accurate and scientific account . . and has the added advantage of being illustrated."
—Medical Times (London)

"Drs. Buschke and Jacobsohn have collaborated on a work which is frank, fearless and sensible. The whole problem of the sex instinct is surveyed concisely and sagaciously."
—Montreal Star

"The structure and function of the reproductive organs are clearly set out . . . Facts . . . are faced and reasons are given."
—The Lancet (London)

* Reviews of the English edition before American publication.

Price $2.50 (*postage 15c extra*)

EMERSON BOOKS, INC., 333 SIXTH AVE., N. Y. C.

When writing to advertisers please mention The Nation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Films

Garbo and Screen Acting

IT would be pleasant if it were possible to say with any degree of honesty that in the picture which marks her return to the screen Miss Garbo adds something new and unexpected to the impression of her that already exists in our imaginations. But, unfortunately, "Queen Christina" (Astor) is no better than the majority of films in which it was her lot to appear before her temporary retirement. In one respect at least, it is considerably worse—the direction against which Miss Garbo has to struggle this time is by Rouben Mamoulian. As far as one can remember, she was never before made to appear positively grotesque, as she is made to appear in one scene in the present film, a scene which bears the indubitable marks of Mr. Mamoulian's directorial fancy. It begins, this particular sequence, with a close-up of Miss Garbo lying supine on the floor of a bedroom in a country inn. John Gilbert, as the Spanish envoy with whom she has passed the night, is by her side, and for some time the action consists in nothing more harmless than the dangling of a huge and probably symbolical bunch of grapes above Miss Garbo's lips. Then, separating herself from her lover, the disguised queen rises to her feet, and with an almost methodical thoroughness begins to caress every object in the room—the table tops, the bric-a-brac, the bedposts, and finally of course the bolster. Naturally, after this has gone on for several minutes, Mr. Gilbert, left among his pillows on the floor, is compelled to ask—and in that voice whose pitch is unique even among former silent-screen actors: "What are you *doing?*" Needless to say, Mr. Mamoulian supplies an explanation, as he invariably does after such subtle effects; but the pseudo-poetic lines which S. N. Behrman provides for Miss Garbo are not enough to prevent a robust snicker from running through a large section of the audience.

As long as Miss Garbo is exhibited in such inappropriate and badly directed roles, it is of course impossible to come to any judgment as to her ability as an actress on the talking screen. But the suspicion increases that she will never be so effective, either as performer or symbol, as she was in the old silent medium. Like Chaplin, Lillian Gish, and a number of others, she had built up for herself a style of acting which depended for its special forcefulness on economy rather than variety of means. She belonged, that is to say, to the pantomimic tradition of screen acting, the essence of whose quality consisted in the almost hieroglyphic simplification of action and emotion. And since she belonged to this tradition by temperament as well as accident, the change to the broader and more effusive methods of naturalistic stage acting was for her particularly difficult. If Miss Garbo compared so badly with Pauline Lord in "Anna Christie" or with Doris Keane in "Romance," it must be remembered that everything in her personality as well as in her training was opposed to the excessively histrionic technique for which the roles in these plays were designed. It must be remembered with what undeniable effect she managed to create her earlier silent roles in 'Torrent," in the screen version of Michael Arlen's "Green Hat," and in the fantastic abridgment of "Anna Karenina" which was called, *tout simple*, "Love." The real explanation for her failure in the so-called big moments in "Green Hat" and the present film is that she is not, and probably never will be, a good histrionic actress. But this is not so much a criticism of Miss Garbo, who can hardly be expected to adjust her style and the personality which has dictated it to every advance in mechanical invention, as it is a criticism of the present talking film, which has not yet learned to reconcile the best of the old with the best of the new. The chief reason that Miss Garbo is so disappointing in "Queen Christina" is that the picture itself is not what it should be, namely, a picture.

Francis Lederer, with years of the best stage experience and training behind him, illustrates, on the other hand, in his first American picture the dangers of a too great display of histrionic ability in a screen role requiring very little of any sort of ability. "Man of Two Worlds" (Radio City Music Hall), which uses the background and many of the sex angles of "Eskimo," is of course an unfortunate undertaking all around; but it required an ineptitude amounting almost to genius to cast this young Czech actor, whose gift is for a wholesale spontaneity of physical energy, as a member of what is reputedly the most lethargic race on earth.

It would be pressing distinctions too far to find in "Enemies of Progress," the new Soviet film at the Acme, examples of the third type of screen acting—what is usually called the "natural." As it happens, the actor who plays Ataman Annenkov, the Cossack captain with whose predatory raids in Siberia after the revolution the story deals, was borrowed from the Moscow Art Theater, and as a result the acting is all too clearly in the stage tradition. For variety of background, rapidity of movement, and neatness of development, however, the film as a whole can be recommended as one of the best that has come out of Russia in a long time.

WILLIAM TROY

Read LENIN on the

● **RUSSIAN REVOLUTION**

The Revolution of 1917 2 volumes, $6 — *Toward the Seizure of Power* 2 volumes, $5

● **WORLD WAR** *The Imperialist War* $3.50

● **MARXIST PHILOSOPHY**

Materialism and Empirio-Criticism $3.00

The only authorized translations, with biographical explanatory notes and related documents. Free catalog on request.

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS, 381 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

Next week in *The Nation*

The Birth Control Conference

by Stella Hanau

Did You Listen to

THE NATION'S RADIOTORIAL BOARD

over WEVD on January 17?

Did you note that the sessions of this board have been changed to every other Wednesday at 8 p.m. over WEVD? The next date will be January 31.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED